like truth and home

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by taliamytalia

Summary

> “I know what you are. You hide it—you need to hide it—but not well enough.”
>
> Hannibal smiles, curiosity and patronization dripping from him. Scorn, for the first time. “What am I, Will?”
>
> Will bares his teeth. “Omega.”
>
> When Will walks into Jack's office to meet the new psychiatrist, he's met with a man presenting as a beta or an alpha. Only Will sees the truth: that Hannibal Lecter is not only an omega, but the most delicious omega Will's ever smelled.

Notes

> inspired by these three fics, my holy grail hannigram fics :)
> https://archiveofourown.org/works/49580569
> https://archiveofourown.org/works/29684736
> https://archiveofourown.org/works/20353135

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

When Will walks into Jack’s office upon request, thoughts occupied with nothing more than his upcoming lecture on psychoanalyzing, he stops dead in his tracks.

There’s a man seated at Jack’s desk, a man who looks up at the sound of Will’s footsteps. Jack is staring at files on his desk, talking about something indistinguishable. He hasn’t yet noticed Will’s arrival, so Will studies the stranger as well as he can before Jack does see him. The stranger is staring straight at him, ignoring what Jack's saying entirely.

Will’s empathy quickly analyzes him. *Well dressed. Sharp in mind. Wealthy. Handsome.* That observation slips through his defenses unbidden, and Will tries to shake it off. From what he can tell, the man’s a beta, nondescript. He holds himself like an alpha, straight back and broad shoulders

However, it's a bit too forced, like he’s too aware of holding that position. Whereas Jack, a textbook alpha if Will’s ever seen one, holds himself like he thinks he’s the most powerful person in a room without even realizing. He gives orders and expects obedience as easy as breathing.

This mysterious man looks like he’d have to think about it, hesitate before doing so, and would with an authority that’s practiced instead of ingrained.

Will tries to tell himself that it’s irrelevant what this man’s dynamic is. Alpha or beta, Will can deal with it.

Maybe he’s wrong about the stranger being a beta. He’s used to Jack’s particular brand of alpha abrasiveness, as Will has always been more like Beverly, an alpha who tries not to abuse his dynamic unless he has a damn good reason. Sometimes Will forgets that there are more than two types of alphas.

It would make sense if he’s passing as an alpha, as there are many betas who do for the unfortunate biases that are still very prevalent—

And then, a bit late, his scent hits Will's nose. A faint sweetness that Will has never smelled on an alpha, and furthermore, a scent he's never been so biologically attracted to on an alpha.

He closes his eyes for a half second and scents the room, forgetting his surroundings in the wake of this scent that's already making his head spin. It's light and airy, it's rich and deep, it's sweet and sharp. Blood and chocolate.

It's everything at once, every fond memory from Will's childhood and pleasant memory from his adult life, every wet dream and every wonderful and violent nightmare. It smells like truth. It smells like home.

The man in the seat across the room, whoever he is, is an omega. He's the best damn omega Will's ever smelled in his life. All Will wants to do is get closer, but he pushes back his instincts with an effort. It's never taken this much willpower to push back against them before.

Will opens his eyes and finds the omega stranger still staring at him carefully, studying. Will knows the prickle of analysis, but strangely this doesn't smart quite as much.

Will still shifts under the scrutiny, but he doesn't have to fight the urge to gut the man for simply sneering at him. There is no sneer. There is only cool and calculated intrigue.

Will, who has never ever been fond of eye contact with anyone anymore than strictly necessary, finds himself transfixed by the man's brown eyes. For a moment, he's gripped. Something about them is different, drawing him in hopelessly. The man smiles just the slightest bit, and Will's breath hitches. He manages to smile back.

Jack shifts, and the moment is broken like a needle through a bubble. "Will, so glad you could join us." Jack's sarcasm slips past Will as he stares at the doctor. "This is Dr. Hannibal Lecter, one of our new consulting psychiatrists. He's going to be assisting us with the Shrike case, and hopefully more cases in the future."

Will nods stiffly and says nothing to him directly. What could he say, after all, to or about a man trying so desperately to hide his status?

The doctor's voice is smooth and even, with all the gentle yet firm confidence of an alpha. The more Will hears him speak, the more he's convinced he's not. He and Jack converse freely, oblivious to Will's plight. Will hardly absorbs a word, entranced as he is with the scent and the man. He has good reason to avoid psychiatrists, but this one interests him.

They hunt the Shrike together. Dr. Lecter corners Will in his motel room and feeds him, a gesture oddly sweet. That scent drives Will mad and that's before breakfast hits his nose. Will tries to ignore the way he smiles at him over their bowls.

He wonders if they're going to address the elephant in the room, the sweet and rich scent that is unmistakably *omega.* They don't. Will being an alpha never comes up, either.

Will kills a man, and his whole world shifts. Dr. Lecter helps him in that house, steadying Will's hands on the gun and taking it out of his reach. Wiping the blood from Will's face with his pocket square. Will feels the very air shifting around them, the fact that both of them are forever changed.

As Jack demands, he starts seeing Dr. Lecter for therapy. *Unofficial.* Will thinks it's a joke, he thinks that there's no way this prim and proper man in thousand dollar suits and impeccable hair could ever truly know him, no matter his scent that Will is quickly growing addicted to. But then Dr. Lecter starts chipping away at the cracks.

He's bold, plucking Will's thoughts from his head with an unnerving accuracy that makes him defensive. The one thing Will was dreading, however, pity and scorn and disgust, is absent.

It's the most comfortable Will has felt in years, more comfortable than he's ever felt around Jack. That damn scent plays a part, but as far as he can tell, Hannibal never uses his omega soothing in his speech. His comfort is all natural. It would be highly unorthodox, but he has a feeling that wouldn't deter Hannibal.

For such an obviously wealthy and cultured man, Hannibal is approachable, easy, and kind. He meets Will's intellect as an equal, something Will is not used to. Gradually, Will finds himself opening up almost beyond his will. Opening up about how he can't stop thinking what it is to kill, how *right* it felt.

And then the conversation turns to the Chesapeake Ripper, the very reason Will is here. Jack has assigned him to the Ripper's cases since Will's success with the Shrike, so thoroughly impressed has he been. Inevitable, but unfortunate that their pleasant conversation should take a dark turn.

Will braces himself for the sting of scorn and rejection he knows he's about to feel. The barely there wariness, the carefully blank expression that veils discomfort. Hannibal asks, "Tell me about the Ripper. Jack brought you on to catch him. Thoughts of the Ripper must be quite frequent in your head.`"

Stupid, stupid. Will never should've made an offhand comment about the Ripper that led them here. He should've been carefully trying to steer them away.

"I've always found the Ripper fascinating," Will says, daring to be honest. Might as well. There's no hope to salvage anything here, and Dr. Lecter can seemingly read his mind. "Unique. Lonely. Unknowable, misunderstood, except to the right person."

Hannibal clears his throat. "Those are all positive qualities. You paint him in a bright light."

Will shrugs, waiting for it to come, for the words, *I think you should see another therapist, Will,* to fill the air. "I've had my theories since long before Jack asked me to profile him."

Hannibal tilts his head and smiles at him when Will dares to look at him again. "Let us turn the conversation to pleasanter matters."

Will smirks. "Why? Does my talking about the Ripper make you uncomfortable, Dr. Lecter?"

“Not at all. You may speak of whatever you wish in my presence, however, we are here to help you unwind, not stress you beyond necessary levels. I want to build trust with you. I want you to feel that when you step into my office, you are safe. Unless you insist on it, I would rather not speak of a serial killer who already consumes your daily life. Do you have an omega at home, Will?”

Will raises a brow. “This is relevant how?”

“Polite conversation. We’re getting to know each other. A simple topic of interest. Is there an omega in your life?”

He considers an array of replies, but says, “No. no opportunity. No interest.”

“Interest on your part or theirs?”

“Mine, theirs. Mostly theirs,” Will singsongs, walking around the office with his hands shoved in his pockets. He tries to remind himself to calm down, that Dr. Lecter doesn’t deserve his ire. He has every reason to ask about Will’s dating ife. It’s one of the biggest ways to find out a lot of things about a person.

“You wear no mating bite. You wear scent blockers. You do not flaunt the fact that you are an alpha, rather you seem to hide it. You don’t use your commands. You don’t intimidate or use your authority over others any more than strictly necessary. I might dare say that you are ashamed of your status, Will.”

Will smirks. He knows that Dr. Lecter is deliberately pointing out something inaccurate to give him the compulsion to defend himself with the truth, but knowing doesn’t dispel the urge. The alpha within him roars at the thought.

A beta wouldn’t ask a question like that. A beta wouldn’t know the ins and outs of an alpha as well as an omega does. *This* omega.

“If there’s anyone here who’s ashamed of their status, it’s not me.” Will shakes his head and smiles. “I just prefer not to force it upon people. That, and it’s as much about protecting myself. The scent blockers so that people don’t comment upon how *surprising* I smell.

“Not using commands so that I’m not manipulated by Jack or anyone else into using them more than I’m comfortable with. Not flaunting alpha status so that I don’t get omegas falling at my feet when I don’t want them.” He chuckles. “Not that, uh, I think that’s a frequent worry.”

Hannibal frowns, a thoughtful curiosity entering his dark eyes. A brown so rich it’s almost red, sharp in its syrupy intensity. That faint sweet smell still lingers, and Will tries not to show how much he’s gasping for it.

“If you would allow yourself the indulgence of fantasy,” Hannibal says, playing with the notebook and pen in his lap, forcefully casual, “is there a desire for an omega buried somewhere deep in your heart? Someone else at home, doting upon you in public and in private? Arm candy for the world, if one cared about that sort of thing? A sense of pride? Another soul to share your space with? To ease the stresses of your day? To conduct intimacy with?”

Will paces back over to the chairs, stopping in front of his own chair. He’s too tense to sit down, however. The smooth velvet of Hannibal’s voice washes over him in a seductive wave, dangerous in its intensity. The very sound of it puts Will’s mind right into those scenarios.

He resigned himself long ago to never having an omega, but like hell he’s going to invite that line of inquiry for Dr. Lecter. The problem with him is that he’s too good, and Will definitely does not want to share the truths about what he knows makes him an undesirable alpha with the most handsome omega he’s ever known.

He makes his voice even before replying. “Of course there’s desire. I am rigorously self controlled, but even I can’t beat instinct. I can suppress it, master it, ignore it in moments of need, but the little voice in my head will always be there. What about you? Anyone at home?”

“No,” Hannibal says, smiling lightly. Amused. He offers no more information, and Will doesn’t fish. “What did you mean when you said that if anyone here were ashamed of their

status, it was not you? There is only you and I in the room."

Will laughs outright. "I'm talking about you, of course."

"What about me?"

"I know what you are. You hide it—you need to hide it—but not well enough." Will takes each step towards him like a thunderclap, laying down each word like it's the winning card in a game. He lays out his design.

Hannibal smiles, curiosity and patronization dripping from him. Scorn, for the first time. "What am I, Will?"

Will bares his teeth. "Omega."

Hannibal's throat bobs. For all the emotion he displays, that might as well be a scream of terror. He studies Will intently, with a tilted head. Waiting. Curious. It seems like he was expecting Will to say something else.

Will adds, "I'll keep your secret. You're safe from Jack, safe from me. I know why you need to keep it, and it's none of my business otherwise." Will smiles as politely as he knows how.

Hannibal looks vaguely amused beneath his veil of shock. "Thank you. You will tell no one."

"No one. What reason would I have?"

Hannibal slowly nods. "What reason indeed." He checks his watch, announces that their hour is up. "I will be seeing you here, then? Next week?"

“Yeah, though I suspect we’ll both be seeing Uncle Jack sooner than that. He likes you. He thinks you’re useful. That’s about the worst thing he could think about you if you hope for any kind of peace in your life.” Will smiles humorlessly and gathers his things from the chair he was too restless to sit in. Hannibal’s words about having an omega knock around in his head. He knows they’re going to be consuming him during every free moment; he sighs.

“Will.”

Will turns around.

Hannibal inclines his head. He’s still in his chair with his legs crossed, but Will senses that a bit of power has faded from him. “You are the first to have discovered my status in many years. I must confess, I am curious about your methods. I have been trying to determine my blunder, your secret, and cannot. How did you know? What gave me away?”

Will furrows a brow. He thought it should have been obvious. Frankly, he doesn’t know how Hannibal has managed to hide it for so long. “Your scent.”

Hannibal frowns. This seems only to perplex him further. “What about my scent?”

“It’s faint, but it’s so persistent. Even with other people in the room and the scent amplifiers that other people use, I could still smell you underneath it all.”

Hannibal smiles, closed mouth. “What do I smell of, Will?”

Will inhales deeply. “Flowers. Not the sickly sweet kind. Something sharp and acidic. Something rich.” He shrugs. “I’ve never known an alpha to smell like that.”

Hannibal nods. “Thank you for the insight. I’ll see you soon, Will.”

Will leaves the office with the distinct impression that he has the upper hand, and not in the obvious ways. He can't get Dr. Lecter's face out of his head, nor his voice as he said, *"Do you have an omega at home, Will?"*

No, no, no. The answer will always be no, no matter the timbre of Hannibal's voice echoing in his mind.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will is in his office when the brilliant and the beautiful Dr. Alana Bloom, his longtime friend, comes to see him.

“Alana,” Will says with a smile, looking up from his students’ papers. “How are you? How’s Margot?” He refers to her rich alpha wife, a woman who dotes on Alana just as much as she deserves.

“She’s good. We both are.” Alana leans against his doorway and smiles. Ever since she married, she’s dressed in high collars and stylish suits. She’s grown meaner and slower to trust, which Will considers an improvement. Wouldn’t do for someone to take advantage of her, such a compassionate omega psychiatrist.

He leans back in his chair. “What can I do for you?”

“Oh, I’m just here visiting for a few days. Jack asked me to profile The Ripper, but I refused him. I told him I didn’t want to get involved in that mess. Anyone who does has a target on their back, and I’m not keen on facing those consequences. Only in town for a few days, but he wants all hands on deck.” Alana comes up close to him at the desk, leans in and whispers, “Hannibal told me you knew.”

Will raises a brow. It dawned on him after the fact that this was the same Dr. Lecter that Alana often spoke of from her schooling days. Nothing but good memories, no reference to his dynamic. “You know?”

She smirks. “I psychoanalyzed him my first year of his tutoring, and he knew he couldn’t deny it and get away with it. How did you know?”

Will truly does not understand how he’s the only who seems to have noticed the obvious. “I could smell him. Sweet omega flowers.”

Alana stares at him with either horror or confusion, and perhaps a touch of awe. “What do you mean, you smelled him?”

Will frowns. “I mean, I smelled him the first time we met, and I’ve smelled him ever since. Not very strong, but it was there. I couldn’t help but notice it. I couldn’t put it out of my mind if I tried.”

Alana’s eyes are wide. “Will, Hannibal wears scent blockers. He has ever since I’ve known him.”

The words hit Will like a brick that’s just been dropped on his head. He manages a faint, “Excuse me,” and rushes out from behind his desk into the hallway. He needs some air, needs to get away from the shocked and betrayed look on Alana’s face.

Right now, she’s probably wondering why in all of her years of knowing Hannibal, she’s never smelled him, yet Will has and he’s only seen Hannibal a handful of times.

Will is fucking wondering the same thing.

He digs the heel of his palm into his eye, struggling to regain focus. *Think.* With an effort, he wrenches his thoughts into something other than blind panic. Hannibal must have faulty blockers. It’s the only logical explanation.

No. A man like Hannibal would use only the best of the best, especially on a matter as important as upholding his reputation. The best scent blockers money could buy, no matter if they’re from the jungles of Asia. His body is obviously a temple. Very careful about what he puts into it.

Will reminds himself to *breathe.* There must be an explanation. They’ve been in Hannibal’s office, Jack’s office, both familiar grounds. Maybe he took them off in a place of comfort. Of privacy. They can be quite stifling, after all.

Maybe he took them off around Will because he trusts him, and finds his presence comforting enough to let down his guard. The thought cuts through Will's blind panic enough to make him smile.

Yes, that must be it. A logical explanation. Anything is better than the thought of the impossibility that's been floating around Will's mind, the idea that Will scented him *through* the blocker. Which would mean—

"Will? Are you alright?"

Will's eyes fly open to find Hannibal there in the hallway, watching him with thinly veiled concern. He's just as stunning as when Will last saw him, unfortunately for Will and his focus.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Um—what are you doing here?" He takes off his glasses to rub his eyes. The words come out harsher than he means, but fucking excuse him if he is a bit flustered right now. That fucking scent overwhelms him. The source of all his problems.

"Jack asked for my consultation on the newest Ripper victim. I assume we will be working together."

Will fights a stab of annoyance at Jack that he thought Will couldn't do his job well enough on his own. He is perfectly *fine* working alone . However, if it means he has an excuse to see Hannibal again…

Goddammit, he can't even stay mad at him for the possibility that he's—he's—something more to Will because of the stupid fucking scent. He can't, when it means getting to spend more time with Hannibal.

"Yeah. Let's go," he says, leading the way. He tries to ignore the faint flowery scent and what it means. Alana passes them both on her way out, telling Hannibal that she'll join him for dinner. Will fights an irrational stab of jealousy at the thought of him hosting her for dinner,

no matter that she's happily married and they're all longtime friends. His alpha instincts roar at the thought of someone spending time with *his omega*—

He suppresses those thoughts *very* quickly.

Brian, Jimmy, and Beverly meet them in the lab to deconstruct the latest body, a man carved into the shape of an anatomical heart.

Something is different about this one. Will knows that the moment he steps into the room. The very air is different. Singing with emotion. Anyone who has ever profiled the Ripper as cold, emotionless, heartless, is as blind as can be. There is romance in the equation here.

He quietly observes this as Brian rattles on about the damage and missing organs. Everything else was taken or marred, but the heart was perfectly preserved. A symbol of what would remain if all else was taken away.

Beverly says, "The Ripper seems to be leaving you a valentine, Will."

Will raises his brows. "Me?"

Brian shrugs. "Interpret the evidence if you don't believe her. Just look at this. If this doesn't spell flowers and chocolate and uh, awkward first date kisses, I don't know what does."

Jimmy hums. "I always thought first date kisses were needlessly difficult. All of that pomp and circumstance. If you want to kiss someone, you should just do so at the beginning of the date. It would remove a lot of the tension. I think you should have that figured out by the beginning, anyway."

Brian scoffs. Jimmy and Brian, two betas who would be well off together, begin arguing about first date etiquette while Will observes the body. The people and the environment fade away as he takes in the Ripper's design.

Will frowns. He has to admit, Brian's right. The evidence is right. Every bit of this tableaux screams of an ache. An ache for someone or something that is more than likely Will. Who else has gotten that close to the Ripper? Enough to know him and face the ugliest parts of him the way no one else does, in order to understand him?

"Quite unique, isn't it?" Hannibal whispers in Will's ear, nearly making him jump. "Visceral, in its stark beauty. The Ripper may be twisted, but he is honest as best he knows how. As much as he can be."

Will swallows and nods. "There is elegance and grace to every cruel gesture, but he's never done anything like this before."

"He's had no reason to, until now."

Jack blows into the room like a hurricane, ending the quiet conversation. His scent is sharp and bracing, and Will curls his lip when he smells it, trying to banish the bitterness, like strong coffee.

Everyone looks up at Jack, who says, "What have you found out?"

Jimmy volunteers, "The victim was carved up while he was still breathing, the organs—"

As he often doesn't, Jack doesn't have the patience. His scent sours. Will notices the very slightest of changes in Hannibal's composure. Tensing, just a little bit. If Jack's scent is strong on Will's nose, he can't imagine how it is on an omega's. "Just tell me when he's going to kill again. And who it's going to be." Jack crosses his arms.

"No discernible motive," Will says, tilting his head. "No pattern with how he's choosing them. We know this, Jack."

“There’s always a pattern. Something they did to him in their lives, something they did to others. Maybe they’re not criminals, but some other kind of transgression—”

“As often as there is, there is just as often not a common theme in art by the same artist,” Hannibal interjects. Jack halts his tirade, so much does he respect Hannibal’s opinion. “And that is what this is to him. Art.”

That quiets Jack down for a few moments. Everyone is looking to Will for his next input, but all he can say is, “Excuse me,” and step out of the lab.

Hannibal follows him back into the hallway, seeming to ignore the obvious cue that Will wants to be alone. Will doesn’t have the energy to tell him to fuck off. And, as he’s learning, he doesn’t mind Hannibal’s intrusive company half as much as he thought he would. They stand in quiet for a few minutes before Will says, “Why did you stand up to Jack?”

“I did not think of it as standing up. I merely wished to offer a new perspective.” Hannibal shifts in a rare showing of nerves. How anything could make this stunning specimen in custom made clothes and the most knowledge Will has ever encountered *nervous* is a mystery. “Will, if I may have only a moment more of your time.”

Will’s heart stutters. Now that they’re alone without Beverly and Jack’s alpha scents getting in the way, the sweetness of Hannibal’s scent is all the more prevalent. Will realizes the one thing that could make a creature like this nervous, and smirks. “Yeah, sure, what is it?”

Hannibal is smiling at him. It’s unnerving. “I’d like to have you for dinner. Would Friday be amenable?”

Will raises his eyebrows. Thinking quickly on his feet, he seizes his chance. “You’ve been so accommodating and generous with your time, your space. About time I return the favor. How about I have you over for dinner instead?”

To his surprise, Hannibal acquiesces with a small nod. Not a hint of argument. “Alright. Would you be amenable to me bringing you dinner, then, instead?”

Will's chest twists. "That would be better for both our sakes, yes, but I don't want to make you drive all that way on top of bringing me dinner—"

"Think nothing of it. I will be more than happy to do so." Hannibal smiles in a soft way that melts away Will's every protest. Wi'll's chest tightens with fresh nerves. He breathes them away, straightening his back. Confidence.

"I'll see you Friday, then."

"I look forward to it already. I'll see you in therapy tonight." He squeezes Will's shoulder on his way out, bringing that delicious scent ever closer. Will has to fight the urge once again to stick his nose in Hannibal's neck and curl around him, never leave.

Will's heart pounds. He doesn't know how the fuck he's going to get through therapy tonight with the thought of Friday in his head, with Hannibal's scent in his nose while managing not to jump his bones. He'll have to manage by the skin of his teeth. "It's a date."

Once Hannibal has disappeared around the corner, Will sighs and rubs his forehead. *Fuck, why did I do that?*

It's a date it's a date it's a date.

The drive to Hannibal's office is filled with nervous contemplation. He tries to shake off the sting of Jack's impatience, the overwhelming noise of the other three grating in his ears, no matter their good intentions. It was nice to see Alana. Part of Will wishes he were driving to have dinner with Alana instead of therapy with Hannibal, and goddammit, there is the thought of dinner with Hannibal again.

He curses quietly and manages not to crash on the way to Baltimore.

Hannibal all but forces him to sit down once he gets in. Will does, though he's restless beyond belief, envying Hannibal the easy way he leans back in his chair with his hands clasped. His smooth, calming voice washes over Will, who is not entirely convinced that he's not being omega *soothed* .

He's felt it before, an uncomfortable tingle on his skin, but this is nothing like that. That's what makes it so hard to tell. Either way, with each word out of Hannibal's mouth, Will melts a little more into his chair.

"Tell me why you cannot relax, Will. What was it about the Ripper's work today?"

Will curls his lip. "Jack doesn't believe me when I tell him the Ripper is an omega. I've held that belief since long before I knew him or worked this closely with the Ripper. He won't have it. Won't even consider it, as desperate as he is for new options. He's…old fashioned that way." Will sighs. "I'm right. I just have to wait until Jack believes me for him to shift his focus to where it really needs to be."

Hannibal is silent for a moment before asking, "What brought you to that conclusion?"

Will laughs. "It's so obvious, I wonder how anyone misses it, stuck on bullshit stereotypes as they are. I—" He rubs his eyes, thinking of the way the lab team reacted when he told them. They believed him. They applauded him for his imagination. Will wouldn't call it imagination. He calls thinking of the Ripper as an alpha *blindness* .

He says, "An alpha is reckless, violent, easily driven. Crimes of passion are more common in alphas than premeditated ones. An omega is more calculated. Not driven by passion or jealousy or bloodlust. Not as much, anyway. Not in a way they can't control. And this is the very definition of control. Every single body has shown us that.

"Controlled, calculated, cold. Every murder is planned. Every move is a mockery of the FBI, and of Jack. Dangling the truth right in front of their eyes, and they can't see it because they believe that only an alpha is capable of such violence." Will shakes his head in disgust.

Hannibal asks, “Have you ever encountered an omega serial killer before? An omega who kills like this?”

“There is no one who kills like this,” Will says. “No one. No alpha or omega or beta has as much drive and elegance and grace as the Ripper. There is no one like him.”

A smile ghosts across Hannibal’s lips. “You sound awed.”

“I am an admirer. I find him fascinating. I get to know him better with every boy. He’s likely just as familiar with my work as I am with his.”

Hannibal clears his throat. “The Ripper has been known to leave you gifts, such as he did today. How does that make you feel?”

Will turns, raising an eyebrow. “Gifts? Interesting word choice, Dr. Lecter. Framing him in a positive light.”

“They are gifts, are they not? Offerings. Tell me what you make of them. The heart he left you today.”

Will shrugs. “He’s either trying to distract me, throw me off the scent by confusing me…or he’s genuine. He knows me, he likes me, and he wants to be my friend. He’s probably not used to someone knowing him quite so well. Maybe it’s refreshing to him.”

“Perhaps more than a friend. The valentine today confirmed that.”

Will stops short, then chuckles. “You think the Ripper has a crush on me?” That hadn’t occurred to him before today, but it makes sense. The Ripper’s gifts have been shy, vulnerable, like a schoolboy with a crush. “It fits. Interesting theory. It was only a matter of time before I picked up a stray.”

“How does it make you feel, the idea of the Ripper finding you attractive?”

Will sighs, closing his eyes. Thinks about it. Imagines the Ripper’s warm breath on his neck, his innocent eyes as he’d look at Will. *Alpha,* he’d say, insincere. Faux innocence would drip from that deadly deadly mouth, and the eyes would dance with mirth. Will would still watch his neck every time it came in biting distance of the Ripper’s mouth, but he wouldn’t be able to help himself. He wouldn’t stay away, he couldn’t.

“Intrigued. Curious. A little hot under the collar.”

“You want to see how you can use this knowledge to your advantage.”

Will opens his eyes to find Hannibal watching him intently. “Yes. God only knows what the Ripper would think of me if we actually met. I imagine he’d be disappointed.”

Hannibal smiles. “I cannot presume to speak for the Ripper, Will, but I have not found you to be disappointing in any regard so far.”

Again with the omega soothing. Will rolls his neck, wonders whether or not to call him out on it. They haven’t brought that tidbit of information into the light of day since Will admitted what he knew.

Later that night at home, Will is undressing to shower when he realizes for the first time that his clothes have picked up the scent of Hannibal’s office. Will freezes with his shirt halfway unbuttoned, sniffing again, and—no, he isn’t hallucinating. The faint sweet scent of Hannibal is still there.

Fuck. He can’t avoid it any longer, now that he’s not stuck in traffic with the Chesapeake Ripper knocking around in his head, not busy feeding the dogs.

He closes his eyes and allows himself to indulge just for a moment. Indulge in the richness of the scent. It’s absolutely and utterly perfect. Every single note hits Will’s nose like a drug, an

addiction, an aphrodisiac. He opens his mouth to taste the air. He’s growing hard, unsurprisingly.

The harsh sound of water hitting the shower floor draws Will out of his reverie. Hannibal is having a nice and civil dinner with Alana right now, and Will is on the verge of popping a knot because of the mere scent of him on his clothes. The definition of uncivilized, discourteous, uncouth. *I have not found you to be disappointing in any regard.*

That would change if he could see Will now. And, knowing what kind of therapist Hannibal is, this will end up coming up in session whether Will wants it to or not.

No. For fuck’s sake, Will is an alpha, not an animal. He takes his shower quickly, but not even cold water is enough to banish the thrumming desire from his bones. He steps out agitated, growling to himself at the lingering smell. It’s not just the smell, though. It’s the thought, the very idea of Hannibal being his, that makes him weak.

Having a crush on his closeted omega therapist isn’t smart, but little Will has done has ever been smart.

Fuck, he can’t help it. It’s driving him mad, and he knows he won’t be able to get any sleep if he doesn’t. With trembling fingers, he settles himself in bed and reaches for his cock. It doesn’t take long. He throws his head back, shuts his eyes, and breathes in that scent still on his clothes.

Hannibal wouldn't be like any other omega. He wouldn’t roll over with a simple word or even a command. He would make Will work for it. He’d make himself a prize to be hunted and earned. And oh, would Will earn him.

Hannibal would kiss him, a tease to start things off. He’d be dirty about it, of course; teeth and tongue on Will’s lips until Will pushed back harder. Half of what Hannibal does is to test, not truly to fight. Testing limits, testing strength. Egging Will on.

He wants to see how worthy Will is. Once he was sure, he’d pull away with a flash of those dark eyes, leaving Will chasing his lips. And then he’d *run* .

Will would chase him out of the house and into the forest beyond, as far as it took. He'd pin him down, hold him there while Hannibal struggled.

The thrill of the chase would sing within both of them, and some part of Hannibal would quiet down when Will had him cornered. Instincts are instincts, and Will thinks that there's a part of Hannibal that isn't averse to instincts. There must be.

This fantasy has no hold on reality, so it doesn't matter anyway.

Will would treat him *so well* once he had him. A feast laid out all for him; he'd hardly know where to start. He'd be so wet he'd be shaking with it, gagging for it. Will would knot him right there on the forest floor.

His breath quickens. His knot forms weakly in his hand, aching for something to wrap around it and milk it. Imagination is enough—with his eyes closed, his senses alight, he can almost feel Hannibal's skin on his, his hot breath against his neck, his teeth in Will's skin.

Will wouldn't mind a bit of violence, a little blood. In his deepest and darkest fantasies, there is blood present, no matter how hard he tries to banish it. In his darker fantasies, the blood is not his.

Hopefully Hannibal wouldn't mind either. He's shown no aversion to Will's darker thoughts so far; if anything he seems to encourage them.

Hannibal would beg so sweetly for his knot, but so falsely. Every bit of submission would include faux innocence. Not that it would matter to Will's hindbrain. The fact that Hannibal would be putting his trust and his body in Will's hands would be an immense privilege, one he wouldn't take lightly.

Will would give Hannibal everything he'd want and more. He would wear him out with orgasm after orgasm, give him his knot as many times as he wanted it, not stop until Hannibal was utterly boneless and satisfied in every way. All Will requires is his name in that soft

voice, those dark eyes staring up at him and only him, all consuming. He'll do whatever it takes to be Hannibal's alpha.

His orgasm slams into him so suddenly it's almost surprising. It's strong, toes curling and mouth opening, his head falling back as his entire body seizes tightly. Waves of pleasure run through him, paralyzing in their intensity.

Once it fades and he's left in the mess, alone in his cold bed in his empty house, reality crashes back into Will. Fuck, he can't believe he just did that. He stands to get a tissue.

What Hannibal doesn't know won't hurt him, even if he has an uncanny ability to get Will to admit what he most wanted to hide. The good doctor hasn't flinched away from Will's bloody thoughts and fucked up desires yet, but those haven't involved him.

Will is going to his grave sooner than he's telling his therapist that he jacked off to thoughts of chasing him down and knotting him in the woods. The blood in this fantasy was kept to a minimum, but it won't be long before that changes. If Will keeps this up, it won't be long.

Once he gets back in bed, cleaned up, he sighs and stares at his ceiling. He wonders how pathetic he must look. Hannibal is leagues and leagues away from his reach, if he even has a taste for alphas. He's an independent man, that much is obvious.

Will would bet that he has iron control over his instinctive desires, the animalistic part of him that might yearn for an alpha. Hannibal probably curls his lip in distaste at those who don't control themselves.

Even if he did want an alpha, the thought of him wanting *Will* is laughable. What the hell Will would have to offer him, an omega of high social status, infinite wisdom, money, and prestige…is beyond him.

But hope is a fickle thing, and it doesn't die easily. Will allows himself to entertain thoughts of Hannibal in bed beside him, wrapped up tight in his arms, warming them both. The thought of Hannibal being his omega, wearing his mark, is just as intoxicating after the heat of the moment. That's concerning.

Will closes his eyes and sleeps better than he has in *months*.

Chapter End Notes

things r getting serious <3

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will thought of a thousand things to say while he paced and waited by his front door. He checked and rechecked the things showing in his humble home dozens of times while he waited, enough for his dogs to give him questioning looks.

Once the knock comes and with it the moment he must open it, all he can manage is, “Hi.” He nearly jumped out of his skin when the knock came. His heart is pounding within the dress shirt that he dug out of the back of his dresser. He dug out the iron for Hannibal’s sake. He’d better appreciate it.

Hannibal doesn’t seem to mind Will’s short and stuttery reply. He smiles, and Will returns it nervously. He looks amazing, of course. Will is sure it’s not possible for him to look anything but. “Hello, Will. May I come in?”

The dogs are outside for the moment. Will has candles lit, a bottle of wine on the table, and his shirt and slacks ironed and rolled clean of dog fur. That’s as good as Hannibal’s going to get in his humble home.

“Of course.” Will breathes, reminds himself of everything he was taught about courting an omega, knowledge he never thought he’d get to use. Even if his father hadn’t told him how to treat an omega, he knows basic human decency.

Manners. He was taught those too, even if sometimes they get lost in the muck. He exhales. He can do this. He can woo and impress the handsome omega in his home.

Hannibal steps inside with his basket, and Will asks, “May I take your coat?”

Hannibal smiles back at him with a hint of surprise. His eyes glitter darkly. “Yes. Thank you.”

Will steps closer to take it from his shoulders, and when he does, a scent hits him. Hannibal's scent.

The scent was present before, of course, as it's how Will found himself in this situation, but it's strong now like it's never been. Overwhelming, chokingly rich, filled with spices amongst those damn flowers. It's mind numbingly distracting. It's the best damn thing Will's ever smelled in his life.

Will's instinct tells him to get close and wrap himself around Hannibal's back, bury his nose in his scent glands. He tamps it firmly down and instead wrestles with the question of *why* Hannibal's scent is suddenly so much stronger.

Hannibal took off his scent blockers. Will can see the proof of it, with his collar undone tonight, exposing gorgeous tanned skin bared beneath that wicked jawline. Seeing just an inch of skin in the man usually buttoned up top to bottom makes Will's mouth dry, his fangs ache to come out and bite.

If Hannibal is not oblivious to it, he does a fine job of pretending that he is. He's unloading the picnic basket onto Will's countertop.

Will breathes slowly. He certainly wasn't expecting *that* . That's about as clear a signal as you can get, and he was *not* prepared for such an overt overture. He's pleased about it, though. A bit of his idle worrying subsides.

Fuck, but he's still wearing his own scent blockers. Someone like Hannibal might take that as an insult if he doesn't figure out that Will meant no harm in wearing them. He can't tell what Hannibal might be thinking.

Furiously thinking of a way to take off his scent blockers without making it too obvious, Will says, "You didn't have to do this, you know. Bring me dinner. You don't have to do traditional omega duties for my sake just because I know now." He tries carefully to make his point without implying that Hannibal is *his* omega.

However, he’s not blind. He'd like to think he’s not stupid when it comes to these things. He is an alpha having a private dinner with an omega in his own home. A dinner that could very well be considered a date. Hannibal has been insistent in sticking around him when prudence would dictate that he stray very far away.

Hannibal casts him a look that’s undoubtedly surprised. “It is my pleasure, Will. I would have offered whether you knew or not.”

Will nods. “I picked out a wine. Hopefully it’s to your taste. I wouldn’t know, I don’t do this often.” Omegas like offerings, gifts specially suited to their taste, he was once told. He agonized far too long over this bottle of wine, far out of his depth. How can you hope to surprise and please a man with taste as immaculate as Hannibal’s? As refined?

Will swallows his insecurity, wrestles it firmly down and replaces it with instinct. With what he believes, what he knows to be true. That all Hannibal wants is his company, and he doesn’t truly care about the wine. This is probably just a friendly dinner in Hannibal’s eyes, but that doesn’t mean he’s not interested in Will. That he doesn’t still want his conversation.

Hannibal offers a reassuring smile just this side of hesitant. Will makes him hesitant? The thought of making this creature hesitant makes his alpha instincts jump for joy. “You are doing quite well so far,” Hannibal says.

Will peeks into the basket. “What did you bring me?”

Hannibal gives a lengthy explanation of the elegant chicken dish he brought, with a platter and all. Will struggles not to feel out of his depth again, searching for a paddle. Hannibal is that paddle. The cure as much as he is the poison

Dinner is delicious, of course. Will has heard at length from Alana about how exquisite Hannibal’s dinner parties are, but he never thought he’d get a private show all for one. It passes in companionable conversation. Will almost forgets to be nervous.

Afterwards, Will excuses himself to the bathroom to take his scent blocker patches off. They’re as essential to him as shoes when he goes out in public, and like shoes, he wears

them in his house most times. Taking them off now for someone is a new experience, something he's not entirely sure he's comfortable with.

The momentary discomfort fades when he pictures the pleased surprise on Hannibal's face when he walks out. He takes a deep breath and steps back out, where Hannibal has taken the liberty of doing the dishes despite Will saying that was unnecessary.

Whatever Will was expecting when he walked back out into the main room with his scent blockers off, it wasn't that look on Hannibal's face. He's plainly stunned when he turns to face Will, whatever polite remark he had planned dying on his lips. His eyes close, and he opens his mouth to scent the air with an obvious air of rapture. Will preens under his attention, standing taller.

Hannibal turns back to the dishes with a neutral expression, but he's not fooling Will, who can smell the exquisite notes of arousal in the air. He swallows.

"Would you like some coffee?" Will asks, stepping closer. "Gotta stay awake for the long drive back tonight, after all." He glances at the clock, noting the late hour, and also noting the rain falling outside. It feels cruel to send Hannibal home in this weather this late, but what would be the alternative? Will's perfectly good, perfectly serviceable bed, shared with the omega his dogs haven't even taken issue with—

"That would be lovely, thank you," Hannibal says.

Will bustles around his kitchen making coffee, letting the peace of such an activity wash over him.

Hannibal finishes the dishes while Will brings the coffee to the couch, where he waits for Hannibal. Will slings his arm around the back of the couch, a perfect arc for Hannibal's shoulders to fall into when he sits down. Hannibal sits and blinks in faux surprise when Will slides an arm around his shoulders. This close, Will can see all the different notes of color in his eye, the depths of darkness.

Hannibal is beautiful, he's always known that, but here he is bewitching. Will's breath gets caught in his throat at the sight of those tender eyes. His scent is so very strong, so deliriously delectable that it makes Will's head spin. Warmth circles all around them, trapping them in a bubble where there is nothing but this couch, this house, and each other. The coffee is all but forgotten.

"May I?" Will whispers, leaning closer.

Hannibal smiles so widely the corners of his eyes crinkle. Will hopes every day to draw out that sight, if only he's given the chance. His scent grows even sweeter, if possible. With those tempting lips, he lays a hand on Will's chest and whispers, "I hoped you would."

Will takes the last leap and leans in, heart thudding, to the greatest first kiss he's ever had. Hannibal is warm and pliant, and so eager. His hands frame Will's face, holding him close. Will brings him closer around the shoulders. He doesn't want any distance between them.

Something within him sings. He knows what it means that he could smell through Hannibal's scent blockers. He wonders if Hannibal could smell through this. He knows, but he'd rather not shine a light on it just now. All that matters is that he *knows,* his body knows, his soul knows that Hannibal is meant for him.

When Will pulls back for breath's sake, he doesn't know what to expect. His heart is still pounding. He's faced with Hannibal and his hesitant smile. There's something shadowy in that smile, something dark and delicious under the faux hesitance. Hannibal is playing up the doting and simpering omega—at least, Will thinks it's an act—by allowing him to take control. However, he knows it's a farce. It has to be.

Will couldn't possibly have charmed this one of a kind omega into going sweet eyed for him after just one kiss, one date, one dinner. Hannibal's smile looks too genuine to fake, but who knows what he's capable of after hiding his status his entire life?

"I can't help thinking," Will whispers, "of the Chesapeake Ripper."

Hannibal falls still.

“You and I talked about how he feels about me. How he’s growing obsessed with me,” Will says, lips twisting into a humorless smile. “Imagine if he could see this now. Me giving my romantic attention to someone other than him.”

Hannibal nods. “Yes,” he says faintly, slicking his hair back. “An interesting thing to imagine indeed. Do I always inspire thoughts of the Chesapeake Ripper in you during tender moments, Will?”

Will sighs and pulls back Hannibal’s embrace to give him some space, run his hands through his hair. “I’m sorry, that was very inappropriate. I don’t know why I said that.”

“There is no topic that is off limits in or out of therapy,” Hannibal reminds him kindly. His hand rubs lightly over Will’s back, and an incredible sense of soothing washes over him as a result.

Will belatedly realizes that Hannibal is using his omega soothing voice to calm Will down. Will is oddly touched, if a little unnerved. The two have always gone hand in hand with Hannibal.

“Your, uh, let’s be frank here, your date just said he thinks about the Chesapeake Ripper while kissing you.”

“Indeed. Notice my scent,” Hannibal says gently. “Has it changed? Do I seem displeased? Uncomfortable?”

Will scents the air with a low moan. The air is thick with arousal, with simple joy, but not with discomfort. Anything but that. It’s as intoxicating as it is befuddling. His heart is still pounding. “No,” he admits.

Hannibal lays his head on Will’s shoulder and looks up at him with a hint of coyness. “Fear gives your scent an irresistible note.”

Perhaps it's not a bad thing that Will thinks of the Chesapeake Ripper in moments like this, if it gets Hannibal to look at him like that.

Will wrangles for control that Hannibal seems determined to remove from him. “Is this alright? I’ve been trying not to think of you this way because you’re my therapist.”

Hannibal shrugs, pants, “We just have conversations. Such considerations never stopped me.”

“Stopped you from what?”

“From imagining you wrapped tightly around me, right from the very first time we met. Your arms, your body.” Hannibal whispers the words, keeping vicious eye contact. “Your scent was delectable, Will. From the first moment I saw you, even through your blockers. I too foolishly assumed that they were weak enough for my strong nose to penetrate. How delighted I was to be wrong.”

Hannibal leans in and inhales deeply near Will’s scent glands, filling the air with a soft moan. And with the scent of slick. Will’s alpha instincts roar, telling him to take, show off, protect, satisfy. Do his job as Hannibal’s alpha.

Will swallows and shoves back every instinct and insistent desire telling him to take Hannibal to bed *right now.* The scents in the room are growing thick, driving him crazy. He’s been hard for minutes, perhaps this whole time. His fists clench against his own thighs. He must show some restraint. He is not an animal.

“You should be going,” Will manages, “if you want to make it home safely.”

Hannibal lifts his head from his neck and smirks. His hair is in a disarray, to Will’s delight. A bit of his otherworldly appearance loses its luster here in Will’s arms, on Will’s couch. “Are you throwing me out, darling?”

The words race over Will’s spine, igniting his instincts and melting his heart. His next words tumble out. “Mm. It is raining and cold. Rather unsafe to drive in that weather in the dark. We wouldn’t want you to be sleep deprived for your patients in the morning.”

Hannibal presses closer and pours that wicked temptation into his voice. A low purr, a soothing and suave sound over Will’s skin. “If there was any means of sleep deprivation, driving in the rain is not the form I would prefer to take.”

Every bit of manners about not taking an omega on the first date and the proper way to court one like a gentleman flies out of Will’s head.

Will lets the thread of his control snap, and leans in to kiss Hannibal again. Hannibal receives him enthusiastically, kissing him deep and thorough. A wicked, wicked tongue.

His hands are starving for Will, reaching for every bit of skin he can reach, tearing through buttons to get at the parts he can’t. “I see no need to wait,” Hannibal whispers against his mouth, “if you are amenable.”

Will yanks him closer by the hips in answer. He’s growling before he realizes it, and puts it to a hurried stop before he realizes the direct correlation between that and the change in Hannibal’s breathing.

Hannibal leans over to straddle his lap, grinding down quickly. Will takes hold of his hips and pulls him close. "I won't do anything you don't want me to," Will whispers. "I'll never command you and use my Voice if you don't want me to. If you do, however..." Will kisses his neck, resisting the urge to leave marks there. He can't. "Tell me what you want. I'll give you anything you want."

Hannibal buries his face in Will’s neck, and Will resigns himself to the knowledge that they won’t make it to the bed. Hannibal pants in his ear and whines, “May I use my mouth to please you? Please, Will?” His scent fills with desperation.

Will curses, gritting his teeth through a pulse of heat that floods him. He will *not* come prematurely. He’ll be the alpha Hannibal needs. If this is what Hannibal needs, far be for him

to protest. “Have at it, baby,” he says, opening his pants.

Hannibal wastes no time. He is hungry for the meal that Will offers, hungry for the opportunity to worship. That is what Will’s empathy says, though he hardly thinks he’s worthy of worship, certainly not by such a magnificent creature.

Hannibal is eager and talented, and he seems committed to driving Will to the brink of insanity. Will throws his head back against the couch, his hand fisted tightly in Hannibal’s hair.

“Was this what you imagined before you came over here?” Will pants. “Like me, did you spend a long night pleasuring yourself and imagining exactly this?”

Hannibal whines around him. Will grits his teeth, tensing his stomach so that he doesn’t come. The scent of Hannibal’s slick fills the air. Will is consumed by visions of Hannibal spread out beneath him, gripping and begging and clawing at him for the knot only Will can provide. His little fantasy about chasing him through the forest crosses his mind, but Will doesn’t allow it to linger. Each thought is sucked clean from his brain with each lick of Hannibal’s wicked tongue over him. His hips lift and jerk, and Hannibal doesn’t stop them.

Hannibal pulls off long enough to pant, “Show me, Will. Alpha. Show me your desire.”

And how can he possibly be expected to hold back after that? Will’s orgasm rolls through him in a wave, endless ecstasy. Hannibal swallows it all expertly. When Will looks back down at him, he's panting for breath, lips sinfully red and swollen.

As he comes down, certain new thoughts fill his head.

Nothing could’ve prepared him for this. A dream has just fallen into his lap. A doting and beautiful omega here to service him with all of the enthusiasm in the world. An omega for whom no alpha has been good enough for decades, or so Will would guess. The skill in Hannibal’s technique makes Will make doubt, but only for a moment.

“Come here,” Will says, fighting through his exhaustion to pull Hannibal up. Rule number one of courting an omega the right way: take care of them in all ways, put them first. There is a certain implicit understanding within that. Will’s father didn’t have to spell it out for him to know that the omega always comes first, preferably twice before Will’s dick is anywhere in the equation.

The shame of his lapse in judgment rolls through him, but he holds hope that he can make it good enough that Hannibal will forgive his blunder. Fuck, his first experience with an alpha probably in many years, and this is what Will delivers?

“I’ll give you anything you want,” Will whispers, dragging his lips up Hannibal’s ear. He feels the shiver that escapes Hannibal’s skin. “I’ll take care of you, omega.”

“There is no need,” Hannibal pants. “I already finished.”

Will shudders through aftershocks as another orgasm tries valiantly to work its way through. “Come here,” he says, dragging Hannibal beside him for a thorough kiss. “Stay for the night,” Will whispers. “Stay here, with me. Don’t drive back to Baltimore now.”

Hannibal smiles warmly. “I see your design. Bed me to get me to concede that the only safe alternative is to remain here for the night.”

Will waits.

Hannibal smiles. He’s loose and vulnerable before Will’s eyes, a reality that Will is not certain how he achieved. “Where else would I go?”

They get ready for bed side by side. Will watches Hannibal Lecter, closeted omega and society extraordinaire, dress down and remove his person suit just for Will. He makes himself at home in Will’s bed, enveloping himself in Will’s scent in a makeshift nest. Will is ginger with him even as he wraps him up in his arms, afraid of scaring Hannibal away.

Will whispers in the depths of darkness, “Was it your intention to get us to wind up here?”

“Yes.” Hannibal’s warm syrupy eyes find his. “Was this what you expected?”

Will laughs. “In my wildest dreams, but not in practicality. I didn’t think you’d…want to do this with someone like me. With any alpha.”

“You are not like any alpha, Will. For you, I am more than happy to surrender.”

Will reminds himself what a precious and rare gift he has been given. “I’m glad,” he says, letting a joyous smirk tug at the corner of his mouth. Hannibal smiles in return, his hair fanning over his forehead, and lets Will press a kiss to his forehead and sleeps dreamlessly.

No nightmares of Hobbs, of blood, of killing, of all the worst parts of his darkest self. He dreams of nothing at all.

Will wakes slowly. Hannibal is sitting up beside him in bed, very awake. The morning light is streaming through the curtains, and Hannibal is wonderfully rumpled and undone, sitting in Will’s old robe. There’s a piece of Will’s stationary in his lap, as well as a pen that’s scratching over the paper.

“What’re you doin’?” he croaks, sitting up to look.

Hannibal smiles upon seeing he’s awake. It’s only seven thirty, Will discovers after glancing at the clock. He wonders how long Hannibal’s been awake. “Committing a divine sight to memory.”

Will’s breath hitches. He’s been described as many, many things in his time, but divine has never been one of them. “Can’t imagine what that might be.”

Hannibal flicks his eyes up from his paper in admonishment. He gathers his things, the picnic basket from the counter, and changes into his clothes from last night. He buttons himself back up, all but for his hair, which remains loosely styled over his forehead the way Will is coming to love. Will remains in bed, watching him go. “It would be wise for me to return home now, Will.”

“Wise?”

“Wise, because I fear that if I don’t, I won’t leave this bed for a moment today.”

Will smirks. “Would that be such a bad thing?”

Hannibal sighs and kisses him softly one more time. A bittersweet note has entered his scent, a hint of tender longing. Will savors the strength of his scent one last time, knowing that the next time he sees him, it will be masked.

“I will see you soon,” Hannibal says with a delectable smile. His lips are red, his neck hideously unmarked. His eyes take on a devious gleam. “Alpha.”

“Go,” Will says, using his alpha voice for the first time. Hannibal smirks back at him. Will is already fighting the urge to take him back, not let him leave, keep his scent in Will’s house until it’s overtaken everything. Will is already growing used to it as soothing and welcoming and familiar. He takes one last inhale as Hannibal opens the front door, showing himself out.

Fuck, he doesn’t know how he’s going to survive this.

Chapter End Notes

this got a little out of hand,,,considering that they're together now in chapter 3 and there are like 10 chapters yall have a big storm coming

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will is living a dream life.

He sees Hannibal nearly every day now, whether that's for the dubious practice of therapy—ongoing despite their relationship—consulting for the Ripper with Jack, or dinner at home.

If they're alone, Hannibal greets Will with a kiss hello, and allows him to step close to sniff at his scent glands through the patches hidden beneath his collar. Will would offer him the same, but all Hannibal needs to pick up his scent is a deep inhale with closed eyes. The sight never fails to make Will warm with pride.

Will allows Hannibal to host dinner in his own house, and Will's moans at the table when he tastes the food seem to be payment enough for Hannibal. The dark looks Hannibal sends him across the table are enough to light a fire in Will's belly.

But it's not just the dinners, not just the scent. It's the conversations they have with whiskey by the fire in Hannibal's office, the range of topics. Anything from the Ripper to Will's childhood to the ancient arts of Ancient Greece. Patroclus and Achilles. Hyacinthus and Apollo. Myths upon myths that Hannibal unravels before Will, his deep voice transporting them to a long ago time.

Hannibal offers more of himself than Will hoped for, though it's still limited, and Hannibal is masterful at directing conversation where he wants it in a way that his companion can't detect. Will hopes that with time, this precious omega will begin to trust him more.

For the first time in many years, Will is happy. Will has an omega. An omega who likes him, despite not having been with any alphas in many years, and for good reason. He's in a relationship and it's going well. It's going better than he could've ever dreamed, being who he is.

Beverly and the boys have surely guessed that something's changed in his life, but he dodges their questions.

And then, one day, Hannibal stops picking his phone up.

It's a Wednesday. Hannibal might be busy with clients, or with Jack. Will tries not to be offended at the idea that Jack wouldn't tell him, not that he knows he and Hannibal are together. *God,* if Jack ever found out that Hannibal was an omega, it would all be over. How would they ever come back from that?

He gets to Hannibal's office that night for therapy and finds the door locked, the lights off inside. All of the excitement that'd been building up in him dies in that moment. The only thing getting him through a long day of work and Jack's grating temper was the thought of seeing Hannibal's smile when he opened the door. Finishing a conversation in 'therapy' about the Ripper before following Hannibal to his house for dinner and wine.

Not so. He tells himself not to be worried about it, even when Hannibal doesn't answer the phone. 24 hour cancellation policy. Hannibal would find it discourteous not to tell Will if he had some prior engagement, or if he had to go out of town.

Even when the morning comes after a sleepless night, Hannibal doesn't answer. Will starts growing worried then, as well as possessive.

He growls at the thought of being away from Hannibal for that long. He's already growing codependent, which is almost as bad as being alone.

But alas, he goes to work and tries to put it out of his mind. Hannibal will call him when he can. He'll have a reasonable explanation. Will has no cause to be worried. Hannibal would say he worries too much.

Same exact process happens on Friday.

Will goes to the lab at the end of the day, quickly approaching hysteria, to look at a new body that's dropped. Not the Ripper, just the killer of the week that they can wrap up quickly. Alana frowns and looks up at him while they're waiting for Jack to get there and explain things. "Will, are you alright? Your head seems absent."

"Yeah, I'm fine." Will scrubs a hand over his face. "I'm worried about Hannibal. He didn't answer the door when I went for my session on Wednesday. All the lights were off. I tried calling, but he hasn't answered his phone despite me calling many times since." He swallows. He has to tread carefully here. Their relationship must remain a secret.

"I'm sure he's alright. Maybe some technical issue. Maybe he had a house call and had to rush out. Have you checked up on him again since Wednesday?"

"No." He's this close to driving there right now.

Alana frowns. "He normally leaves a notice if he has to rush out suddenly. He doesn't like rudeness."

They're interrupted by Jack, who barks, "Will, I need you in the morgue, c'mon."

Will is glad for the distraction of work. It keeps his mind off of Hannibal for a short time, and he satisfies Jack and the team with his profile of the killer. They can tell his head is absent, of course, but they don't ask and he doesn't answer.

Before long he's in his car, driving home in the silence and the snow. Only one thought consumes him, even as he feeds his dogs, eats alone, showers, beds down.

Where is Hannibal?

Will sighs and glances over at the clock after tossing and turning for too long.

Fuck it. He hops out of bed and into his car. It's only nine—he was determined to go to bed early, get some proper rest, figure out Hannibal's whereabouts in the morning, and go about this like a mature and responsible man. But his plans never fucking work out, do they?

Will doesn't allow himself to think as he walks up to Hannibal's front door an hour and a half later. Doesn't allow himself to contemplate how monumentally stupid this is and how much he's overreacting. There's a perfectly logical explanation for why Hannibal disappeared off the face of the earth out of nowhere.

He rings the doorbell and steps back to wait. It's a long few minutes of shifting and waiting and growing more and more worried until he goes to ring the doorbell again. He can't tell if the lights are on inside. All he cares about is that vestiges of his omega's smell cling to the door.

He's not your omega. The inner alpha within cries out at that, but Will tamps it down. He is more than his biology. He is here checking on his lover to make sure he's alright. Nothing more, nothing less, no matter that he can't stop dreaming about the very thought of tasting Hannibal's lips again. It's been two days. How is he supposed to last?

Then and only then does the door open.

The scent is the first thing that blasts Will in the face first. The door needs only to open a crack for it to come wafting out, the sweetness strong like never before. It only grows stronger the wider the door opens. Will's lips part, and his senses start to sing.

His blood begins to pound with arousal as the unmistakable scent of an omega in heat coats his tongue. His mouth waters, he almost moans with how quickly he grows hard. The air is thick with it.

As if that wasn't enough to send him to his knees, the second thing to fuck him up is Hannibal's appearance. Hannibal is a *wreck.* His hair, usually not a strand out of place, is loose and plastered to his sweaty forehead in places.

He’s in a dressing gown. All of his skin is glistening with sweat, now that Will looks. His eyes trace greedily down every inch of Hannibal’s skin he can see, the triangle at the top of his dressing gown. With an effort, Will brings his gaze back to Hannibal’s face.

Hannibal’s eyes are glazed over in pleasure, and the dressing gown looks hastily tugged on. He seems perpetually out of breath, heaving for it even when he says nothing.

His eyes, glassy as they are, change when they register that Will is there. Hannibal lets out a soft whine, a noise Will didn’t know he could make.

Will looks into those eyes and sees his thoughts all but crying out. *Alpha. My alpha. Get him inside knot me breed me claim me, alpha, mine, please—*

Will braces a hand against the doorway for strength, afraid of what he’ll do if he doesn’t ground himself. “Oh my god,” Will murmurs. His voice is a low growl. His breath quickens, he’s so hard now it hurts just from the scent alone. “You’re in heat.”

Hannibal is shaking. “Will,” he pants, “go. Now. I won’t be in control of myself for long. Go while you can.”

Will should go. His mind races through the possibilities.

He can’t afford to spend days holed up with Hannibal through his heat. He has responsibilities. They both do. He can’t let that fall by the wayside and disappear like that. What would he tell Jack? Jack may be hardheaded, but he’s not stupid. The more Will gives into this, the harder it will be to keep Hannibal’s secret.

Will should follow Hannibal’s advice. He should turn around and go home and plan for a better first heat in which he lays Hannibal down and makes love to him the way he deserves. Not something like this, quick and sloppy and driven by desperation.

However, the dark sheen in his eye when he looks back up at Will *calls* to him. Hannibal's lips say one thing but his heart and body say another. *Stay, help me, I need you.* Will's answering instincts cry out just the same.

Stay with him, satisfy, protect, take away his pain. Make sure he's only made better because of you. The thought of anyone else helping Hannibal here makes him see red. It takes every fiber of self control he has not to take him into his arms and slam the door behind them both.

Will doesn't have much time to decide before Hannibal either shuts the door or pounces on him. In a few seconds, Will does some very quick calculations.

The thought of leaving him here aching and cold and alone, with nothing more than likely a knotted dildo to soothe his need, is equally unbearable. Will couldn't neglect him like that. The fresh whimper Hannibal makes, shaped like his name, makes Will ache in turn.

He can't leave Hannibal behind. If he came here because two days without him was too horrible to bear, there's no fucking way he'd survive the weekend knowing Hannibal was suffering here alone while Will had the chance to help him.

This wasn't how he wanted their first proper time to go, yeah, but plans change. Will wants nothing more than to follow that delicious, delirious scent to its source and bury himself deep both physically and emotionally.

It's Friday night. He'll text his dog sitter. He'll call Jack on Monday morning, the moment he's free. Jack should know better than to rely on him alone to profile their killers. As Will told him once, Jack is the head of the BSU, and he can't make one profile without some help?

Will pleads, "Hannibal, let me help you."

Hannibal's eyes snap up. Curious. Desperately hoping.

Will hurries on, “If you’ll have me, I’ll make it good for you. I’ll make you feel so good you forget your own name. It must be killing you by now.” Will steps closer. “So cruel, for you to have to suffer through this alone. But you don’t have to be alone.” He cracks his neck, bare of his scent blockers. Hannibal’s nostrils flare. “Let me help you.”

The scent of sweet omega slick and heat floods his senses. Will openly moans, letting Hannibal sense his appreciation. Not that he needs to, with the scent of Will’s arousal on the air, joining the mix. The mix of scents is strong enough to drive Will mad. His head spins with it, and thanks to the blood that has all gone to his cock. “Please. Don’t shut me out. Not now.”

Hannibal’s eyes flick down to his body with a long look. His eyes linger on the bulge in Will’s pants. Then, he hauls Will inside by the collar and draws their mouths together. The door slams behind them. It doesn’t have to lock for Will to know he’s trapped for the next… how many days…

Hannibal *drags* him through the house, to the bedroom. Their lips hardly detach the whole time. Will tries frantically to think, a difficult task given the current circumstances. If it’s Friday night, and the last time he talked to Hannibal was Tuesday night—

“You’ve been in heat for three days?” he pants when Hannibal pulls away to scent him. His sweaty forehead rests against Will’s shoulder when he rests there for a moment. Will is grasping at the edges of his dressing gown, thinking *get it off, get it off.* Hannibal is too busy with Will’s buttons to help him.

His voice wavers. “The morning of the thirteenth was the first moment of my plight. It came on rather fast. I was…unprepared.”

The thirteenth, yes, that was Wednesday. Of course Hannibal would have the mental capacity to think of dates in numbers, even consumed by biology.

Will shoves him off, ignoring his growl of protest, to rip open his own shirt. With arousal pounding through his veins, with a desperate and whining omega, he doesn't have time to waste. The flash of heat in Hannibal’s dark eyes at Will’s show of strength doesn’t hurt either.

Hannibal lays down before Will can push him down. He spreads his legs, and the intoxicating scent of slick fills the air.

"How did you make it through three days of no relief?" Will asks, shucking his pants and everything else. Hannibal is staring at him with an open mouth, rapture on his face. Will is staring just as much at every bare inch of skin that's now revealed to him. It's glorious. It's beautiful. Will's fangs are already aching.

"Couldn't have been much," he adds as he climbs onto the bed, into Hannibal's nest. It's thick with Hannibal's scent, a mass of blankets and pillows and clothing. Hannibal's eyes darken further, reaching for him with desperate fingers. Will keeps himself tantalizingly out of reach—dangerous to do to an omega in heat, but he has always been one to flirt with danger.

"Just your own fingers. Maybe a toy. Something about you seems too much of a purist to use one."

"I only got through three days because of you, Will," Hannibal rasps. "I hoped that you would come to me."

Will's face crumples. "Why didn't you just call? I would've been here the moment I heard your voice."

Hannibal growls and surges up, evidently sick of waiting, sick of talking. He heaves Will into position with a surprising strength, and with no further preamble, all but shoves himself onto Will's cock.

Will groans and shuts his eyes, struggling not to come right then. Hannibal is hot and slick and tight, and though he feels divine, Will can't let that consume him. Enough talking. Enough doing anything but fucking. Hannibal is desperate for a knot, for *Will's knot,* and Will is going to give it to him.

He wastes no time, beginning a brutal pace. There will be time for gentle and attentive later; they'll be here a while. Right now, all Hannibal needs is rough and fast, and Will won't

bother denying that he needs this too. Hannibal curls his legs around Will's hips, his arms around Will's back. Will noses at his scent gland, drawn there by much more than the frenzied passion of heat.

Though Will has never had the privilege of being inside him like this before, he's imagined it countless times. Nothing in his wildest dreams could've compared.

Hannibal hitches his hips up higher with every thrust, arching into Will's touch. He pleads into his ear, "Alpha, knot me. Take me. Make me yours." He attempts to force Will's head down by his scent gland. By sheer force of Will and the shreds of common sense he has left, Will buries his teeth in the other side of Hannibal's neck instead, the safe part.

You're already mine, Will thinks, as Hannibal shakes apart between them. He comes with a low groan, squeezing tightly around Will's rapidly growing knot.

Hannibal must be experiencing his first real moment of relief in days as Will shuts his eyes and gives into the slick heat of Hannibal's body. His knot pops in, and he comes with little aborted thrusts of his hips. He comes back to himself to find Hannibal purring, eyes closed, arms still wrapped tightly around Will. Will stays carefully still, not wanting to risk the wrath of an omega in heat just barely sated. A peaceful fifteen minutes pass before Will's knot deflates.

After Will's knot has gone down, after Hannibal has been cleaned up and Will is reasonably sure they have time before the next wave hits, he pulls Hannibal close. He arranges them precisely in bed, Hannibal's head pillowed on his chest, so that he feels protected and safe. As he should be, under Will's embrace.

Will chooses his words carefully, all too conscious of Hannibal's fragile ego and even more fragile patience. Now that he can think clearly for the first time in three days, there's no telling what he's contemplating. "I thought someone as studious and self-controlled as you would be on heat suppressants."

Hannibal doesn't reply for a long minute. When he does speak, he—Hannibal Lecter, star of Baltimore society—manages to sound sheepish. "I have been, ever since I presented. All my adult life. This is the first cycle I have undergone since I was quite young."

Will raises his eyebrows. “You went off of them?”

Hannibal smiles up at him as if there’s something obvious Will is missing. “No. I took them as always. Mine simply seem to have lost their potency.”

Will chuckles. “Maybe you should change your prescription.”

Hannibal lifts his head from its perch on Will’s chest to meet his eye more squarely. His voice grows somber. “Much like my scent blockers, I have used only the best throughout my life. Wherever I moved, I kept the same prescription. They have served me well for decades. I can assure you that there is nothing wrong with my suppressants. Much like my scent blockers, I can only assume that they failed because of you.”

Will’s thoughts skid to a halt. The first thing he can manage is not at all what he means to say, which is, “I’m sorry.”

That actually startles a laugh out of Hannibal. “I have no regrets. This all has turned out in my favor. Order has emerged from the chaos. I am not sorry.” He covers Will’s hand on his chest and smiles up at him with a touch of hesitation—something Will didn’t know he was capable of.

Desperate to change the subject, Will says, “I’m on rut suppressants, by the way. You don’t have to worry about that.”

“I know.”

Will raises an eyebrow in question.

Hannibal curls his lip just this side of disgusted. “They have a very particular odor.”

Will smiles. Alphas don't have to worry about their suppressants failing because of a true match. "You have quite the nose, even for an omega."

Hannibal smiles adoringly. "So do you, for an alpha. You notice the less obvious. You go beyond the surface level, which is what most alphas only care about."

Will sighs deeply, inhaling the dizzying scents in the room. An underlying scent peeks through, something familiar. Something his own, beneath the layers of slick.

Will turns and digs through the nest until he finds the source. His own flannel, one he forgot at Hannibal's house one evening and has been looking for ever since. He grins slowly, turning back to Hannibal. "Is this—"

"Like I said, I only survived the three days with the thought of you. The scent helped me cling to my sanity." Hannibal rolls on top of him in a neat move, grinding slowly. A mixture of fluids drip out of him.

Arousal tugs at Will, and he can feel himself swelling up again. Hannibal gives him a deep, dark look, and Will smirks. "Rest is over?"

Hannibal sinks back onto his cock in answer, making himself moan and Will's breath hitch. Hannibal rolls his hips, his face pinched in pleasure. The film of it is covering his eyes over, the heat consuming him. Will can see the desperation on his face, feel it in the depths of his gut when Hannibal begins to ride him slowly. Still Hannibal has the wherewithal to quip, "The first of many."

Will places his hands behind his head and watches Hannibal ride him. Heat pools in his own gut as he watches Hannibal's mouth fall open. Will makes little thrusts up just to punch gasping whines out of Hannibal, but he's content to let Hannibal do the work. Make him work for it.

Maybe, once enough time has passed and the desperation consumes them both, Will shall get him begging for it. Oh, what a sweet sight that would be. The idea makes his cock twitch and pulse within Hannibal's tight walls.

“Your thoughts, darling,” Hannibal pants, hands braced on Will’s chest, “are sinful. I can feel them.”

Will doesn’t realize how hard he’s gripping Hannibal’s hips—or that he’s gripping them at all—until Hannibal starts whining and pushing into the touch.

Hannibal smiles down at him with such genuine affection, such raw vulnerability. No one else has ever seen him like this. He made that clear.

I can’t ever go back now, Will thinks. *This is it. I’m stuck with him for life.* They’re not mated, they’re not talking about that, they haven’t said anything eternally binding, but Will still knows it’s true. He belongs to Hannibal now.

He can only dare to dream that Hannibal feels remotely the same about him.

Chapter End Notes

the true smut youve all been waiting for <3

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will doesn't know how many rounds it takes before Hannibal collapses from exhaustion. Will means to stay awake and admire him without his walls up, but Will soon collapses too.

When Will awakes, it's to an angel. Hannibal is sitting above him and smiling down, admiring him just the way he did when he woke in Will's bed that first morning together. Pen and paper are absent, however. "You're awake," Hannibal whispers, leaning down to kiss him. "How beautiful you are."

Will smiles and clasps his hands under his head. He admires the long line of marks down Hannibal's neck, and gives into the pulsing affection in his chest. "You're not so bad yourself."

Hannibal smiles and whispers, "I'll make breakfast."

Will feels as if ice water has been dunked over his head. He scrambles upright. "Oh, you don't have to, I should be the one serving you after everything you just went through—"

"Please, allow me. It would be my pleasure." Hannibal smiles like he knows how attractive he is, but that can't be the case. He's putting clothes on for the first time in five days—granted, they're just white pajamas and a robe, but Will still mourns the loss. He's eager to see when he can see that again.

"All of my life, I have shunned what my dynamic means. I would like the chance to explore the possibilities of what true happiness can look like, if you would oblige me." Hannibal's voice softens. "It is just breakfast, Will. You worry too much. May I?"

Will would have to be a fool to turn down such a sweet offer, no matter if he feels like an alpha taking advantage. He supposed breakfast after spending the heat together isn't that bad. "You don't need my permission. Not for that, not for anything."

As a reward for his honesty, Hannibal kisses his cheek in passing. Will follows him down to the kitchen, watching him make biscuits.

While the biscuits are in the oven, Hannibal comes back to the couch and rubs Will's shoulders with deep, long pulls of his fingers. The same type of kneading he just subjected the dough to, leaving Will distinctly and strangely jealous.

Thorough touches leave Will breathless with relief. He swallows a groan as Hannibal works out the tension in his skin, paying special attention to his bad shoulder. Will is not certain what prompted that, but he isn't going to complain. Hannibal's scent is sweet as sugar, in an entirely different way than the heat and slick he's been enveloped in the past few days.

Will inhales and sighs. The scent is unexplainably calming.

"Brave, strong, handsome alpha," Hannibal rumbles right into Will's ear. It's a blatant manipulation, a few hand plucked pretty words with the intent to turn Will to butter. He tries not to let them.

They're meaningless, after all, a mockery of himself and Hannibal. Despite his stern internal restraint, his instincts glow and leap in pride at the sound of his omega's pleasure with him. At the words every alpha dreams to hear from such a sweet voice.

"Thank you for protecting me," Hannibal adds, leaning his chin on Will's shoulder, placing a kiss there. He slides his arms around Will's waist, clinging tightly. "No one could better than you."

Again, his instincts sing, and again Will ignores them. He is better than that. He needs to prove to Hannibal—Hannibal, who could have any alpha he wanted on a leash, begging for the privilege of loving him—that he is bigger and better than his instincts. That's probably what this sweet talk is; a test that Will means to pass.

Will turns his head with a snort. "You don't need my protection. You don't need anyone's."

Hannibal kisses the bullet scar on his shoulder, sliding his hands up and down Will's sides, continuing his massage. His touch leaves fire in its wake. "It is still nice to have it. Nice not to have to watch my own back at all times."

Mournfully, Will goes home that evening.

Mercifully, Jack doesn't say anything.

Will is back at his desk one evening that week, reviewing files of the Chesapeake Ripper's latest victim. He's struck again this week, twice already. Like he's making up for lost time. Like he was interrupted.

Wait. Will flips through case reports, autopsy reports, going over everything he knows about the Ripper. That he's an omega. Going against his personal instincts, the intuitions that have never let him down so far.

Will's pendulum swings. All the pieces fit together in his mind.

The Chesapeake Ripper…is Hannibal. Hannibal is the Ripper. They're one and the same.

Will has been so fucking blind, for all that Hannibal has done to show him the truth. To let him see. All those conversations about how the Ripper must feel about Will, the Ripper leaving him valentines, the advancing growing more obvious and more bold only when Will met Hannibal and Hannibal was in a position to point it out to him…

Will's stomach reels. His mind gets ahead of itself. Try to disprove it. *The trophies…what is he doing with the trophies?*

Will's mind flashes through every meal he's shared with Hannibal, largely prepared by Hannibal himself. They were always made with care, and they always contained meat. Meat

that didn't taste like anything he'd ever had before. It was exquisite, but he chalked that up to luxury the likes of which he has never been able to understand. Now he reconsiders.

Will's breath catches. Horror rises in his throat, bile mounting, but it recedes after a moment. He's been eating them. Will's been eating them too.

Will forces himself down that same path unwaveringly, no matter the emotions rolling up his spine.

Hannibal has found him worthy enough to share with, over and over again. A type of intimacy entirely different from any other they've shared, two predators feasting on prey. One of the predators was unknowing, unappreciative, but that will change now.

From day one, when he met Hannibal and killed Hobbs with him in the room, Will has received his affection. There's a very good reason his too good to be true therapist hasn't flinched away from Will's dark sides. They are just alike.

Will grabs his keys without another thought. No more delaying.

He and Hannibal agreed to meet at Will's tonight for dinner. Will gave him a key to his house before he left the heat weekend at Hannibal's, a decision he's somewhat regretting now. It's raining, coming down in buckets. He's the only one on the road, thank god, because he's speeding to get home.

Will considers knocking on the door to his own house, but the rain decides that for him. If he has to spend another moment in these soaked clothes, he'll murder someone himself, and it might just be Hannibal.

It might be Hannibal anyway. The anger at his deception rolls through Will in waves, consuming him. He lets it. He's going to need the strength in order to face off effectively.

He collects himself, and walks up to his own front door. It's unlocked and ajar, despite the rain.

Hannibal is at the counter cooking dinner. Will is home early, he knows, but of course Hannibal doesn't leave evidence. He never does. He's bent over a piece of meat, cutting it carefully and perfectly. Will knows what that meat is. When bile should rise in his throat, only a thrill of anticipation does.

This is his omega. And his omega is a killer.

"Hannibal," Will pants, standing in the kitchen soaked in wet clothes. "I know."

Hannibal stares at him, very still, knife still in hand. He doesn't set it down. He doesn't break eye contact. His scent remains carefully neutral. "What do you know, Will?"

Will's lips pull back in a snarl. "Chesapeake Ripper."

With nothing more than a blur of movement, Hannibal has Will on his knees on the floor. There is no weapon held against him, nothing except Hannibal's hands hanging at his sides. He doesn't need anything else. Will is acutely aware of that, and makes no sudden move.

He's staring at Will hot and hard, his chest barely moving. Will's heaves. Hannibal is waiting, waiting to see what he'll do. Will has a precious opportunity, he mustn't waste it.

Will knows Hannibal's more than capable of fighting through alpha commands; to try command him now to placate him would be only suicide. Besides, that's not how he'll do this. Hannibal deserves better than that, better than him, but Will is selfish and done pretending he doesn't desire the darker side.

"Hannibal. I see you. I accept you for what you are, and nothing less. I want to stay with you." Will raises his eyebrows. "Will you let me?"

Hannibal says nothing. That wild look is still in his eyes. The fear. The worry that he can't let his guard down, not even for a moment. Will understands it, but he hopes to god it won't triumph over the longing that's hiding underneath. An answering longing pulses in Will's chest.

"I love you, Hannibal. More than I thought I could love someone. More than I thought I was capable of being loved. I know what this means. I want you, all of you. Let me have you. Let me show you that I am worthy of being your alpha. Please."

Hannibal breathes heavily for one more moment, and then his grip slackens on Will ever so slightly. Will knows what it means. Knows that he is being given a test, and he must pass.

Will uses all the alpha strength he has to rise to his feet and slam Hannibal into the wall, the knife from the counter held to his throat in an instant. Will expects to find his wrist bitten off, his hand sliced off with his own knife, but Hannibal remains still under his touch. They both fall still for half a moment, their breaths intermingling. Will gazes with a clear path into Hannibal's eyes.

"Listen to me," Will snarls.

And then, he hears the most bizarre sound: the unmistakable soft hum of an omega purring. The sound is so startling that Will almost drops the knife, but Hannibal doesn't press his advantage during Will's blunder. He's still staring at Will intently, with something akin to defeat on his features. And yet, the corners of his eyes crinkle with his smile.

Couples who fell in love at first sight and have been together five years before trying for a baby for the first time, cuddling in bed for the afterglow. That's when you would hear an omega purr. Not when an alpha is holding an omega at knifepoint.

Will swallows and presses the knife just a bit tighter to Hannibal's throat. Keeping eye contact, Hannibal presses into the blade, Their breaths are caught between them. *Intimate.* Intimate beyond anything they've shared before. Will is seeing all of him, well and truly, for the first time.

It's beautiful. It's just as, if not more beautiful than Hannibal glassy eyed in the throes of pleasure, as Hannibal dressed to the nines, as Hannibal smiling at him warm and comforting while they cuddle in bed. It's true. It's enlightenment before Will's eyes. He's just found religion.

"Are you a killer, Will?" Hannibal whispers.

Will digs the knife in, hard, enough for more blood to well up beneath it. Hannibal doesn't flinch. If anything, his smile widens, and his scent turns more and more pleased. Slipping dangerously close to arousal. "I'm not going to kill you." Will lowers the knife at last, his heart in his throat. "Are you going to kill me?"

Hannibal smirks. “No.”

Will nods and tightens his grip around the knife, fishing for his own pocket knife in his pocket. Hannibal’s eyes dart down to it, but he doesn’t raise protest. “What happens now?” Will asks.

“I planned to hunt tonight, before you returned home. I will continue it.”

Will nods. “Let me come with you. Let me watch you work.”

He’s certain Hannibal will say no, but he only frowns for a moment before nodding. The rain has let up a bit.

They say nothing more as they walk into the woods. Will doesn’t ask where they’re going, he knows these woods like the back of his hand. Knows the cabin deep within them.

Will speaks for the first time since they left the house. “Will it be the Ripper?”

“No.” Hannibal casts a glance back. “It can be someone else.”

Will smiles. “A secret admirer.”

Hannibal’s hesitant answering grin makes his heart race. His scent sweetens with each passing moment.

Perhaps they are going to be alright after all.

Chapter End Notes

the chapter that almost ended me is finally done!! sorry for the wait <3

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will wakes with Hannibal snuggled tight into his side, his head pillowed on Will's chest, his arm slung across Will's waist. Will smiles, heart seizing at the trust and vulnerability in Hannibal's sleeping face, but also the utter contentment and bliss.

Me, Will thinks. *Mine. I am the cause of that bliss.* The contentment he can't contain turns into full fledged and uncontainable joy, which results in a wild grin.

He thinks back to what they did last night after he followed Hannibal into the woods. Well—Will hardly did anything, just watched Hannibal do what he does best, but being there felt like being just as guilty. Hannibal made a tableaux. It wasn't the Ripper, but it was every bit as elegant and beautiful.

Will sees now. He finally sees what Hannibal was trying to show him.

He watched Hannibal, he participated by proxy, and then they came back to the house and made a love so deep, so fierce, it ended with them both covered in blood. With them, what other love is there to make?

Will shivers, remembering the marks Hannibal left on him. They go far beneath the surface, but damn–he'll be feeling those scratches on his back and chest for days.

Will stares down and wonders how he could ever have hated Hannibal. How he couldn't have accepted him for all that he is, *because* of all that he is. Will shall make excuses to Jack, he'll lead him away from the Ripper, whatever it takes. He'll keep Hannibal all to himself, his dog on a leash.

Hannibal stirs under him, and Will's arm tightens around him. "Good mornin'." He startles himself with the strength of his accent in his rough morning voice.

Hannibal's face is still hidden in Will's arm when he murmurs, "Mylimasis."

Will chuckles. The word was foreign to his ears. Knowing Hannibal, and the rather dumbfounding realization Will had the other night that English is only his *fifth* language, it's probably something eloquent and clever. "What?"

Hannibal cracks his eyes open, a confused pout emerging onto his features.

"Baby, what'd you say?" Will whispers with a smile. The name slips out before he can stop it.

"Mylimasis," Hannibal whispers into his chest, pressing kisses there.

"I can't understand you." Maybe it's not for Will to understand. He smiles regardless. He'll enjoy Hannibal's sleepy morning voice no matter what form it comes in.

Hannibal is silent for a while, and then a very rough, "Beloved," is pressed into Will's skin.

"What?"

"I called you beloved in my native tongue. A tongue I have not been motivated to use in years, let alone around someone else. I was rather startled that I used it without my own knowledge. As always, you defy categorization." Hannibal cranes up to take a kiss.

Will smiles into his mouth as dizzy butterflies erupt in his stomach. "Well aren't you sweet, sugar," he rasps with his southern accent still showing. It's playful more than a serious term of endearment, but Hannibal's eyes melt softly and Will resolves to call him that at a much later time when he will have forgotten.

This is all that Will wants. To wake up next to him every morning, no matter whose house or hotel it is, no matter where they are. The more blood the better. Will wants it all.

And then Hannibal shifts, his face tightening and closing off from Will just a bit. Will can't stop the words from tumbling out. "What is it?"

"I have desired for some time to tell you the truth of what happened to me as a boy. In the words of the pencil lickers who would study me, what made me this way. Only now, I suspect, can I reveal it."

Hannibal swallows and begins, "When I was a child, my parents and my sister and I were happy. One winter the bandits came. I was eight. My parents were killed, and my sister and I were held in the dungeon."

He tells the whole story of soup, and teeth, and his first taste of pigs getting exactly what they deserve. He relays the tale with a lack of emotion, but Will knows better. He hears every word Hannibal can't say, every instance where he begs Will to form his own conclusions. He doesn't want to have to spell it out any more than he has to.

Will's chest tightens until at last, he's done. "Hannibal, that's…"

He doesn't need to say it. They've always been able to read each other's minds.

"Have you gone back?"

"No. How could I?"

Will nods.

"There was a girl," Hannibal says, "a woman now. She was my aunt's handmaiden when I lived with my aunt and uncle. She takes care of my home now. The grounds, the interior. The

one remaining prisoner, the last of the group who killed my sister. She is as much his prisoner as he is hers."

Will shakes his head. "I hope you murdered them all," he growls. "I hope they got what they deserved." The alpha within him roars, roars at the thought that his mate ever had to suffer, probably still suffers from nightmares.

He's not your mate. Calm down.

Hannibal slowly smirks, running a hand down Will's chest.

The doorbell rings, shattering their peace.

Will murmurs, bordering on a growl, "Whoever that is, I'm tempted to do some very unsavory things to them if they don't go away."

Hannibal's eyes darken with the threat. The reminder of what Will watched him do last night fills him in a slow and satisfying heat. "Hopefully not as unsavory as the things you were about to do to me," Hannibal purrs.

Will smirks. "No. Never could be." He dives back in, taking another kiss. Hannibal's tongue licks over his teeth, pushing deep, panting hot into his mouth. The kiss is sloppy and messy and filthy, and the sound of it alone makes Will start grinding into Hannibal's hip.

When Will sucks on his lower lip, hoping to draw out the blood from the sore there, Hannibal whines softly. The sound makes Will shudder with a bright burst of heat, making him shake on the elbows propping him up. He slides a hand around the back of Hannibal's neck, up into his loose hair—

The doorbell rings again.

Will sighs into Hannibal's mouth, savoring that last shred of warmth. "I'll be right back." He slithers out of bed and pulls on a robe. He doesn't look back, knowing he wouldn't be able to resist the pull of Hannibal's heated gaze if he did.

He opens the door to a not too unexpected surprise. They did leave the tableaux in the woods, after all, at the cabin. "Jack. What are you doing here so early?"

Jack doesn't look in the mood for games. "This won't take long. I'd just like a word, Will."

It's rarely just a word, but Will holds his tongue. "Yeah?"

"We found a body this morning. He was found close by. There was some evidence that led us right here in the woods behind your farm, somewhere between twelve and two. Where were you last night?"

Will swallows. It's not hard to put on a look of the greatest offense and confusion, but his heart still pounds with the lie. He plays it just like he and Hannibal talked about, ignoring Jack's sour scent infecting his home. "I was here."

Jack raises his eyebrows. "All night?"

Will furrows a brow in irritation that's not at all fake. "Yes, all night, Jack, what—"

"Anyone other than yourself who can verify that?"

"I can."

Both Jack and Will's eyes shoot toward the creaking patio door. Will's jaw hangs open. This was *not* the plan to lead Jack off the trail.

Hannibal is standing in nothing but Will's dress shirt from the night before, hair askew, covered in Will's bruises in a bright bloom across his neck. A proud necklace.

His stubble is long, and Will imagines with a thin panic that there might still be some dried blood under the shirt.

Despite that fear, he can hardly tear his eyes away. Fuck, he just saw Hannibal in bed, but seeing him in the cold light of the morning is different than the ethereal glow of him in Will's sheets. Proof that it's just as real and just as good as Will thought.

Hannibal looks good enough to eat, and Will is highly inclined to do so. His mouth waters.

Control yourself, he scolds himself. He doesn't have scent blockers on, he doesn't need to be giving Jack a second free show. Damn it, Hannibal.

Hannibal adds, staring Jack down unflinchingly, "I was with him all night."

Jack looks like he doesn't know whether to be disgusted, sheepish, or both. "How long has this been going on? When were you going to tell me, Dr. Lecter, that you were…" He gestures at the air. Will rolls his eyes.

Hannibal crosses his arms. "What are you accusing him of?"

"I'm not accusing him of anything. Just asking his whereabouts. I'll be in touch about the murder. See you on Monday, Will. Dr. Lecter. Good day to both of you." He smiles and tips his hat, stepping out without another word.

The moment the door's closed behind them both, Will leans back against it and sighs. "Not how I wanted that to go."

Hannibal inclines his head. Only he could look so confident and so shameless in his current state. “I told you that I was grateful for your protection.”

Will frowns. “Is this about your status or the way you get your dinner?”

Hannibal’s eyes soften. “You tell me.”

#

It’s a few weeks later in Hannibal’s office, under the pretense of therapy, that the dreaded elephant in the room finally comes up.

Of course, of course it’s right before Will has to leave for a case out of state. By the time they’re in the thick of it, Will can’t even remember how it began—he only knows that he’s pacing the room, and Hannibal’s voice is raised but even, the close he’ll ever get to showing true anger in the light of day.

“Will, we could smell each other through our scent blockers. From the first time we met, our bodies let us know that we were bound. You know what this means. Ignoring it will not make it go away. I would suggest that you have ignored it long enough.”

Will pulls back, offended. *“I?”*

Hannibal doesn’t flinch from him. “Yes, you. I have given you ample opportunities to have the conversation that must be had, and yet you avoid it at every turn.”

“I wonder why,” Will chuckles. “Someone like me isn’t meant to be mated, let alone to someone like you.”

That makes Hannibal fall still. His voice is dangerously blank when he says, “Expand.”

“I’m unstable. I have nightmares. I’m violent and dangerous. I’m not good at socializing. I am off putting and too strange for other people’s taste. I make my living by getting into the heads of serial killers. People describe me politely as creepy or different. People like Freddie Lounds call me insane. I’m not exactly…you all know. Rich.” He swallows. “I’m definitely not the alpha that everyone dreams of. I’m an alpha most people try to avoid.”

Hannibal steps closer, his scent growing stronger with each step. The sour notes are fading, slowly being replaced by a warm affection. Thankfully, the sickly sweet notes of pity and sympathy are absent. Hannibal has always, *always* treated him as an equal when even Jack and Alana failed to. No one has ever seen Will so thoroughly.

His voice is an anchor, long and slow and smooth. “Will, have you ever known me to be displeased with any of the things you just mentioned?”

Will cracks a humorless smile and raises his finger. “That’s another thing. Sometimes I miss social cues.”

“Maybe so,” Hannibal continues, “which is why I must assure you that you have never misinterpreted any of mine. I want you, Will. just as you are. Just as you’ll have me.” He takes Will’s hands.

Will shakes his head as the scent of his mate— *not his mate, not his mate, but almost*— threatens to overtake his faculties entirely. “You’re an omega. I’m an alpha.”

Hannibal smiles. “How very astute. My point exactly. When you are with me, wouldn’t you rather not be restrained by something as trivial as remembering not to bite? Don’t you want to know what it feels like?” He steps even closer. “To truly let go?”

“I can’t take that risk when I’m with you,” Will snaps. “I just rein myself in.”

“Loosen your restraints, this once.” Hannibal places a hand on his back and attempts to coax him down. Wicked, wicked tempter, as dangerous as the snake in the garden.

Will keeps the rein tight, if only so that he won't give Hannibal the satisfaction. "It won't be just once. It will be every time, if you get your way. This is more than curiosity. This is desire."

Hannibal smirks. "There is something I am displeased with."

Will searches his eyes. An icy chill grips his heart, stealing his words and his breath. He manages, "What's that?" in a relatively even tone of voice. He can only imagine how his scent has turned bitter.

Hannibal squeezes his hands. The contact is warm and exquisite, and Will is desperate enough to bear it. "Not only is your self-esteem so low that it blinds you, but your eyes and evidently your nose are all three malfunctioning, if you cannot sense how utterly besotted I am for you.

"Before me stands not a man, but a god. Someone brilliant and bright. You have honored and respected me before, during, and after you found me out, as well as our courtship. You never attempted to dominate me or reduce me to my instincts in a way I didn't fully consent to."

He smiles. "I won't belabor the other things you have done for me. Instead of being the alpha you see modeled around you, you are an alpha who has been overly accommodating and gracious time and time again.

"In moments when you lost yourself, you apologized—needlessly, I might add. Your dark side knows no qualms when attacking others as beautifully and mercilessly as you do, and yet you lift that exception for me. I am not afraid. I have no complaints. I have not had any since the day we met. It is not me who is displeased, Will."

Wil's mouth dries. "How do you see me?"

"In you I see an angel, Will, as beautiful and terrible as any Biblical story or saint. Your mercy is brutal, stunning all the more so because of its rarity. You forgive the way God

forgives. We have seen this with me…and with our pigs. I love every part of you, Will. I love you more than I thought possible.

"All of my life I have hidden my status, and only with you have I found freedom instead of bondage. Mere words could never encompass the depths of my devotion, but I hope my actions can."

Will can't take it anymore. He stifles a sob and collapses into Hannibal's arms.

Hannibal sighs and pulls Will close. "I was worried that you didn't find me adequate enough to be your mate."

If Will would've taken a second to use the damn empathy that's supposedly so good, he would've determined this precise cause of Hannibal's agitation. He's angry at himself the next moment.

"I've had to resist the overwhelming urge to claim you every time I take you," he growls, backing Hannibal against the wall. "Every time I scent you, every time I hear you whine and whimper for me. You're addicting. Even when I'm with you, I can't get enough of you. I don't ever want to let you out of my sight. Out of my bed." He smirks, dirty and dangerous. "I want you to be mine, Hannibal. But you already are, aren't you?"

Hannibal swallows. His eyes flash dark, smitten. Will sees himself reflected in Hannibal's eyes, letting the power he has over this tremendous creature wash over him. Hannibal's lips part as Will takes a step toward him.

Will whispers, **"Answer me."**

Hannibal gasps, *"Yes.* I am yours, I have always been."

Will doesn't know where he finds the restraint, but somehow he does. With an effort, he pulls back, ignoring his screaming instincts.

“When I get back?” Will whispers and raises Hannibal’s hand to kiss. “We’ll mate. Bond like you deserve.”

Hannibal smiles. His eyes begin to glaze over with longing for his alpha, at the thought of Will truly becoming *his* alpha. Everyone will know, everyone will see. They’ll see the truth: that they’ve been each other’s since the day they met, mating bite or no mating bite. “It will be my honor.”

Will nods as the alpha in his chest purrs in relief. Something else belatedly occurs to him. “If you get mated, you’ll have to go off of heat suppressants. They won’t work anymore, no matter how powerful. Are you sure that’s something you want? That freedom taken from you?”

Hannibal’s smile persists. “I could think of little better than being forced to spend a week alone with you. You are the one who would be trapped with me, unless you would leave me to suffer them alone.”

“Never,” Will snarls, the very thought making him see red.

“Then it is settled. As it is, my suppressants have been failing lately thanks to you. I don’t see how mating could improve that predicament.

“Return to me safely,” Hannibal whispers, kissing Will’s face. He wraps himself around Will so tightly that Will fears he won’t be permitted to leave. Part of him wishes that Hannibal would insist on making him stay, locking him in and slashing his tires if he has to. Just so long that Will doesn’t go.

“I will be awaiting you the moment you tell me you’ve returned. I will leave the door unlocked for you. Unless you’d rather do it at your house?”

Will smirks. “More room to chase you through the halls of your house. I’m not going to make it easy for you.”

Hannibal’s eyes flash with heat. “No, you never do. I hope you never will.”

Chapter End Notes

surprise bitch <3 new chapters everyday til it's finished!

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

By some Herculean effort, Will leaves him behind and drives to North Carolina for a case. It's routine, easy, and almost enjoyable in its simplicity if not for the thought of what's waiting for him at home. Part of him wishes he'd had the confidence to throw caution to the wind and tell Jack to fuck off, to let Will arrive a day late.

He could work with a disturbed crime scene as long as he showed up with Hannibal's bite mark on his neck. Hell, he would sing and dance in the rain if Jack asked him to.

As it is, he's a bit grumpy and snappish to anyone who asks him for more than the bare minimum, impatient to get home. Hannibal's next heat should be coming right around the time Will gets home.

And then they get a call. A call that *Dr. Lecter has been attacked at his office, and he's asking for Mr. Graham.* That *something is seriously wrong, and if you could please hurry back as soon as possible.*

Will doesn't wait for Jack, who says he will follow anyway. Will is so afraid, angry, and sick with want that he hardly speaks to Jack before he's off, and the only reason he doesn't run greater risk of a speeding ticket is because that would slow him down further.

He bursts through the door of Hannibal's office, ignoring all the emergency vehicles outside. Jack is close behind him, but all Will cares about is Hannibal. The stench of blood and fear and pain fills Will's nose, an angry sour scent that stops him in his tracks. His hackles rise, his teeth click together. He might be growling; he's not sure, for when he sees Hannibal all else melts away.

Hannibal is seated behind his desk, his hair strewn over his forehead and his face bloodied up. His eyes are glassy, fogged over from pain or something else. Will prowls toward him, ignoring the EMTs in the room, ignoring the body bag on the floor, ignoring Jack behind him. That something else hits his nose a second later, filling the room with its sweetness. Omega slick.

Omega *heat.*

Hannibal's lips part, and he whispers in the truest and most desperate voice Will has ever heard, "Will, I need you."

Will's heart shatters, and his instincts kick in. He's rushing across the room before he can think. "Oh, alpha," Hannibal sighs as soon as Will's close. Will's vision becomes a haze, his blood thrums with the need to protect and satisfy.

Jack covers his nose in a modicum of remaining respect and demands, "Do you mean to tell me that he's—"

"Not now, Jack," Will says. "Take care of the dead body if that would distract you."

"You're his alpha? He's your omega? I don't see any mating marks. How long has this been going on?"

Will ignores him, gathering Hannibal close into his arms. Hannibal immediately starts nosing at his scent gland, making Will shiver. Goddammit, Will should've mated him before he left. He should've done everything he could for Hannibal. He should've never let whatever happened happen. "I'll talk to you afterwards," he says. Jack's lucky he got a reply at all.

"Will–"

"Back off, Jack," Will snaps. The command surprises him as it slips out, and the shock on Jack's face is priceless. Hannibal starts purring in his arms in reply to his alpha's protectiveness, burrowing his head deeper into Will's shoulder.

In the little bit of lucidity Will has left, his heart aches for Hannibal. That he couldn't bring this out into the light of day on his own terms. That Will wasn't here for him. That he had to go through this at all.

Will might not be able to change that, but he can change now, and do what has been long overdue. “I will talk after,” he says again, slowly, as if to a child. Jack is wearing a stern frown, but even if he tried to stop Will, he would fail.

Will whispers into Hannibal’s ear, “Come on, let’s go,” and helps him out to his car. Will refuses to look at his disheveled suit, the blood on his hands and face. Will doesn’t know if it’s his; he doesn’t want to know.

I could’ve lost him today. I could’ve lost him while I was in fucking North Caorlina, and I wouldn’t have even known because we’re not mated. Like a fool, I let him get away.

Never again.

The moment the car doors shut behind them, Hannibal is on him. “Will,” Hannibal pants. “Alpha.”

Will hoped they’d be able to make it beyond the car before doing this. It’s easy as breathing to help Hannibal dislodge their clothes just enough, to guide him down in an easy glide that has Will groaning and throwing his head back against the headrest. Hannibal immediately starts moving. Will is starving for him, ravenous, and snarls his desire into Hannibal’s neck.

Each graze of Will’s fangs over his scent gland makes Hannibal whine and clench around him. Will groans into his skin, lapping at his gland, panting into it with poor self control. Hannibal’s arms and legs tighten around him. He pets Will’s hair, smoothing it back from his forehead.

Even consumed by the heat and the need that’s overtaken them both since the moment they saw each other in the office, Hannibal takes on a moment of lucidity. The film clears from his eyes, and he smiles. “Claim me, alpha.” He curls a hand into Will's hair to drag him closer.

Will can’t hold back any longer. He groans brokenly and sinks his teeth deep into Hannibal’s scent gland. Hannibal keens and arches up into him.

Will stumbles through the afterglow in a daze. Hannibal is snuggled into him, what Will is learning is his favorite place to be. The sight makes his heart flutter fondly.

He's really mine now. No going back.

There are no regrets, only a quiet contentment in his chest.

Will tries to keep the disappointment out of his voice. A quick check of his empathy shows that Hannibal is perfectly content right now; and like hell Will is going to do anything to willfully ruin that. However, he does need to say the words resting on the tip of his tongue, get them out of his system. "This was not how I imagined this would go."

Hannibal smiles with mirth. "Romantic dinner? Rose petals and silk sheets? Sex by candlelight?"

Will chuckles. "Towels for the blood. Something like that."

Hannibal says carefully, "I have no regrets."

The hesitation in his voice nearly breaks Will's heart. "I don't, either. Don't ever think that." Will pulls him closer, if that's possible. So much for; Hannibal's too smart for his own good. "It's just that you deserved better than this. In the front seat in broad daylight."

"It is you," Hannibal says soothingly. "That's all I needed."

Will shuts his eyes, wondering what it's going to be like now. Mated to the Chesapeake Ripper. Mated to a cannibal. Mated to the only man he'd ever want.

They can't deny that Will has a dark side, too. Can't deny that he's going to join Hannibal in bloody matrimony sooner than later.

He imagines it. Cuddling in bed early in the morning until someone *dares* interrupt their peace with some bullshit that the alpha of the house should deal with. Not because his omega wasn't capable, but because it's Will's duty to protect.

Of course, at a word from his ruthless mate, he'd leave off, and let Hannibal deal with it gladly. But some part of Hannibal would want to see Will at his most brutal. All for him.

Will would rise to the occasion flawlessly. Oh, how he'd snarl, "You come into my home. Threaten *my* mate . *"*

The pig wouldn't know what was coming.

"Will—" But not even Hannibal is enough to pull Will back from the edge. The red would overtake his vision, and he'd pounce.

When he'd come back to himself, his chest would be heaving, and he'd be covered in blood. Hannibal's steady hands would be right there, guiding Will's away just like they did with Hobbs.

When Will breaks free of his haze enough to meet his gaze, Hannibal would be staring at him with a smitten, besotted expression.

In the present, Will opens his eyes. "Darling," Will drawls, "how do you feel about heart tartare for dinner?"

The look of love on Hannibal's face is the softest, most delectable thing Will has ever seen.

Chapter End Notes

a little early morning chapter for ya!

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will returns to the office with a small amount of trepidation. Thanks to Jack and his big mouth, the news is out everywhere that Hannibal Lecter is an omega.

He has a conversation about it with Alana, of all people, when he gets stuck in the hallway that morning. Alana expresses her condolences that everything unfolded the way it did, and then gets to the real point of her query, the question Will knows has been tingling against her all this time. “What drew you to him?”

Will sighs, figuring that the faster he answers, the faster he can get out of this. She's done nothing to deserve his ire, and he answers in kind. “He is my oasis. After a bad day, I can come back to him and trust that I can unwind with him. He knows me. He sees me. He understands and accepts me. He doesn't suffer from the common cold that we all refer to as insecurity. That kind of attitude in someone can do things to a person. Good things.” Will smiles, knowing he'll be keeping Hannibal's deadly secret for a lifetime. He's all too pleased to do so. “What more can we ask for?”

Alana smiles back. “I feel the same thing with Margot. She’s my home, even when we’re not at home.”

Will takes that in with a nod. *She’s my home.*

I wonder if I'm his home too.

Will is quick to take his figurative list of demands to Jack’s office. He’s not taking any shit. Without leaving room for Jack to open his mouth, Will says, “I am taking two weeks off, and nothing you can say or do will stop me.”

Jack doesn’t even look surprised, just tired. “How about I triple your pay? I can’t afford to lose you for two weeks, Will. We need you here.”

“My new mate needs me more,” Will snaps, “and I don’t have to justify myself to you. You got on just fine for many years before you knew me. I think, as the head of the Behavioral Science Unit, you can do it again for a fortnight. Hell, take a vacation yourself. God knows you could use it.”

He smirks. “I’d suggest you triple the pay as it is. See you in two weeks, Jack. Give my regards to Beverly and the guys.”

Without another word, he sweeps out of the room.

On the way home, Hannibal picks up on the first ring. “Hello, my mate.”

“I just told Jack off,” Will says, “and told him that I was taking a two week vacation. Also, I might’ve gotten him to give me tripled pay. I’m on my way home to you now. My place.”

“Bellissimo,” Hannibal whispers reverently. “Marvelous job, my love. How would you feel about a week’s vacation? Bliss in the tropics for seven days. The sun warming you through, and you warming me. Just you and I.”

Will is already imagining what they’ll be doing to fill those seven days. Throughout their whole secretive affair, they haven’t had extended alone time that wasn’t driven by crazed need.

They’ve been sorely lacking an escape from the world. They’re new mates. It’s as good as newlyweds. Will grins at the very thought. “Sounds perfect, darlin’. I’ll follow your lead. You’re the more experienced world traveler of us two.”

“I’ll start making arrangements. There is, however, somewhere I would like to bring you first. A social function I have been planning to attend for some time. Though I was not expecting to bring an alpha to this function, I am pleased all the same. I feel no need to keep a secret, and I would show my alpha off to the world on my own terms this time. If you are willing.”

Will frowns. “What kind of social function?”

“The theater. The opera.” Hannibal’s smile is evident from his voice. “A production of *Turandot.* However, as fine as the entertainment is, it’s not the reason I desire to take you there. The company is the draw.”

For him, maybe. However, Hannibal has done so much, sacrificed so much for him already. He’s been gentle and loving and accommodating from the start, and the least Will can do is say yes now. “As long as you don’t expect me to do anything more than make polite conversation,” he says wryly.

Hannibal’s laugh is low and genuine. “Darling, nothing about you is polite. Why would I reason that?”

#

It’s no surprise that Hannibal is dressed to the nines for the opera. What’s a little surprising if not disappointing is how strongly Will reacts to it. Hannibal is in a sleek tux, tying a bowtie in the mirror with nimble movements of his long fingers that make Will’s mouth dry.

His thoughts must be plain on his face. Hannibal takes one glance at him and frowns, sighing mournfully. “I sincerely hope that one of these days, you won’t feel the need to apologize for being yourself at your most beautiful.”

Not even acknowledging *that,* Will is simultaneously glad and angry at the thought of other people seeing him like this.

He growls and dips for a moment into Hannibal’s psyche. *I will taunt them with what they cannot have. I will show them the only one who has me; who knows me.* Hannibal needs no collar to be known as *property of Will Graham* when they walk into that party .

Will sighs heavily. “You look good enough to eat.”

Hannibal knows this, of course, and Will doesn’t have to see his face to know he’s standing in that self satisfied way. “Why don’t you?”

“Because I know how much you’ve been looking forward to this.”

“We couldn’t leave you unsatisfied, my dearest alpha.”

The word makes Will tingle. Hannibal says it now as often as he can, during every plausible excuse. Will is not sure what Hannibal likes more: hearing *my alpha* off his own lips, or the way turns soft when he does.

Hannibal could ask of him anything in those moments and Will would obey without question, whether the order was to kill a man or have him right here and now against the closet door. Not that he couldn’t always.

Luckily Hannibal doesn’t use his power to his advantage often. Will’s only saving grace is that he has the same sway over Hannibal. Whenever he starts feeling a bit out of his depth, like Hannibal is growing cocky and forgetting his place, he plays dirty.

“I’m sure I’ll be satisfied before the end of the night,” Will murmurs. “I’m not certain what to wear. I can’t decide what would be more satisfying. Picking out something myself…or letting you pick. You’d like to see me in one of your own choices, wouldn’t you?”

Hannibal is undeniably pleased. Daresay he preens. “Surprise me, and choose it yourself. There will be other times for me to adorn you.”

Will dresses silently. In the moments before they’re about to leave, Hannibal’s shoulders are taut. It’s the only indication that anything is off. Will frowns, and then Hannibal’s scent hits his nose, overpowering. It’s the same as always, just as sweet and rich like heavy perfume, but it’s far too strong. It’s enhanced.

Just a hint of it makes Will's blood start to rush, his trousers tighten. It's pure sex, an aphrodisiac in its purest form.

Will takes a moment to practice the tightest self control he ever has in his life. When he's reasonably sure his voice will be steady, he says, "You're wearing that out to the party?"

"Yes." Hannibal's voice is even, unaffected. "Does my alpha object?"

Will grits his teeth as Hannibal turns around. He takes a small comfort in the fact that as Hannibal's mate, he'll be able to smell this better than anyone else there. Still, Hannibal will be very noticeable. Will doesn't dignify him with a response.

"Why," is his only question.

"The role of a doting omega is required," Hannibal says. "So be it. With an amplifier, I will allow those we need to convince to see how devoted I am. That you make me happy. For you, it is a role I am more than happy to play."

There are amplifiers that are gentler, that don't bring out so many notes of arousal. Hannibal chose this one on purpose.

Will smirks. "Not entirely a role." He lays a hand on Hannibal's chest, staking his claim. The hitch in Hannibal's breath is immensely satisfying. Will straightens his lapels, breathes out, and recovers from his blunder.

His arousal has simmered down low, much more bearable. He'll be halfway to pitching a noticeable tent in his pants all night, but that can't be avoided. Hannibal will be the only one looking there.

"Are you…certain," Will asks, each word carefully chosen, "that you don't mind this?"

Hannibal smiles. “Deduce, Will. what do you think?”

“You needn’t do that. I would happily do whatever you asked of me without its interference.”

“I know. Do you want me to stop?“

“No.”

Will sighs.

Reading his mind, Hannibal says, “Instead of mourning the loss of my scent, dwell on the thought of returning here tonight, secure in your knowledge that you are the only one who will know it.”

As always, Hannibal chooses his words carefully, playing Will’s emotions perfectly like he’s plucking harp strings. As always, Will falls for it hook, line, and sinker, growling softly into the back of Hannibal’s neck.

Hannibal gently pulls him away, assuaging him with a soft kiss that makes Will’s lips tingle. He smiles, rendered not quite shy but soft in a distinct way. Will is giddy.

Hannibal reaches for his pot of hair gel, but Will interrupts him with a soft, “Don’t slick it back.”

Hannibal pauses.

“I like it loose. Makes you look more human.”

Hannibal smiles softly,accepting this without protest. With that, they're out the door.

In the lobby at the theater, Will tunes out the mindless social interactions Hannibal smoothly glides through. He's just polite enough not to besmirch Hannibal's name, but these sort of things have never been his strong suit. Hannibal knows that.

Will tunes back in when he hears, "And who's this tall and dark?" from a woman he doesn't recognize, but who's talking to him. Hannibal smiles at his profile proudly. Will straightens his back.

"Will Graham," Will says, trying to keep his voice from a monotone. "Nice to meet you."

"How do you know Hannibal?"

Lord, she must be fucking blind. Noseblind, at the very least. A simple beta trying for higher than her station. Will loathes her on the simple premise that she is shallow and here to fawn over Hannibal. "I'm his alpha."

He leaves it at that. "How rugged—and handsome," she whispers, leaning in conspiratorially to Hannibal as if Will isn't right there. She pokes her finger into Hannibal's chest.

"I couldn't be happier," Hannibal agrees.

The woman adds, "I never would've guessed you'd be an omega! Or that you'd shackle yourself to an alpha." She tilts her head and frowns. "What caused the change?"

Hannibal smiles brightly in the face of her rudeness. "Fate and circumstance dictated our relationship. I would have had it no other way."

Will glances at him, somewhat startled.

“A bit of blood, sweat, and tears, as they say,” Hannibal adds, curling his hand tighter around Will’s arm. “Nothing a bit of vigorous mental exercise couldn’t build.”

Will chokes.

“I would watch myself, if I were you,” Hannibal says with a bright smile. “My alpha is patient and generous, but also exceedingly jealous. He doesn’t take kindly to people who attempt to lay claim upon his property.”

Hearing Hannibal refer to himself in such a way makes Will’s blood sing, his pulse jump. Only when Hannibal squeezes his arm does he realize he’s been growling softly this whole time. He stops with an effort.

The woman takes it in stride. “It was so lovely to talk to you again, Hannibal. Are you going to be throwing those dinner parties again? If so, you should bring your alpha. I can see why you like him, he’s so dreamy.”

I’m right fucking here, Will nearly snarls. At least she’s saying nice things about him, not outright insults. Hannibal takes it all in stride, looking as calm and unaffected as one could possibly be.

The moment she’s gone, Hannibal says, “It is less that I fear their scorn and more that I detest their callousness. Revealing myself before this seemed a matter of inconvenience. Now that everyone knows, I have nothing left to lose. Never doubt that I want to be claimed as yours, darling.”

“You don’t *fear* anything. It’s too simple, too pedestrian a word. The very concept of fear is not worthy enough to be associated with you. You wouldn't surrender to that, or to anything.”

“This is not surrender. This is freedom. This is a cure from the bonds of expectation, and a foray into redefinition. I am filled with clarity.” He leans in and kisses Will sweetly. “Let them all see. Let them think what they will. I care only what you know.”

Will swallows. He's all too aware of the staring, but Hannibal is still smiling like this is the happiest he's ever been.

Hannibal eyes him and says, "Tell me what you're feeling."

"We're surrounded by peacocks. They're so much worse than you. You're not going out of your skin every time someone touches or compliments me. I am…" He shakes his head. "Struggling."

Hannibal adjusts Will's tie, smiling still. "I am sure of myself. Of my claim." He looks at Will with false innocence. "Are you?"

"Of course I am. You're mine, not theirs. I know that. It's just irritating to not be able to remind them of it the way I want to."

Hannibal takes the back of Will's head in hand, guiding him closer as he runs his fingers through the short hairs at the nape of his neck. He guides them gently towards the bathroom, where they can have a modicum of privacy. "Do you need to reassert yourself?"

Will huffs. "No, I'm not an animal."

"Will, each time we encounter a new person, you glower and glare and growl until they're scared away. While I am enamored of your possessiveness and protective nature, I don't quite desire to burn the bridges here."

Hannibal brings Will's head closer to his neck, coaxing and urging. "If you would oblige me and leave a few marks and your scent to reassert yourself, I hope that we may continue."

Will battles with himself for a few moments before giving in, not finding a good enough reason not to. He growls and sinks his teeth into the mating mark. The sweet scent of slick

fills his nose. Hannibal grips him tightly and Will grips harder. He licks onto it, lining the skin above and below it with marks.

Will murmurs, “Have you been like this all evening?”

“All evening,” Hannibal promises. “Since the moment I see you in your finery, I longed for you. Each moment where you asserted yourself proudly and happily as my alpha only worsened my plight.”

“What would you have done if I commanded you to drop to your knees right there?”

“I would have let you. Happily. No command would be necessary.”

Will groans. “Clean yourself up. We should get back out there.”

Hannibal doesn’t move, just clinging harder.

“Get up, Hannibal,” he murmurs, “and I’ll fuck you for it later.”

It’s a battle to get through the opera without dragging Hannibal right back into that bathroom, and Will thinks Hanniabl isn’t faring much better. It’s an eternity between the moment the opera ends and the moment they get into the car. They get held up by at least five more mindless drones batting their eyelashes and desperately trying to get Hannibal’s attention. Will is blowing steam out of his ears. He holds it together for Hannibal’s sake.

Finally, blessedly, they make it home. Hannibal’s pheromones fill the car, and Will narrowly misses crashing because of it. Hannibal still looks good enough to eat, and smells it too.

Will turns around to hang up their coats. When he turns back, he’s faced with Hannibal on his knees, his head bowed.

“Alpha,” he sighs. It’s a plea. It’s desperation, without any of the fevered urgency of heat. This is vulnerability. This is beauty the likes of which Will shall never be worthy of, but he can try.

Will’s heart melts. “Darling,” he says. “What do you need?”

“Only you, Will. Only you, Alpha. You’re all I need.” Hannibal rests his forehead against Will’s thigh, pressing idle kisses to his trousers. “Guide me. Take me. Make me yours. They…” He trails off, appearing to surprise himself with his hesitation.

Will picks up his train of thought. “So many unworthy hands touched you tonight. They could see that you’re mine, but it got a little lost, a little muddied, didn’t it? I slipped away from you too. But tonight, I’m yours, and you’re mine.”

Will breathes deep, finally allows himself to appreciate that maddening enhancer instead of fighting against it. The strength of Hannibal’s scent washes over him, and he tastes the air with his tongue. The first moan of the night passes his lips.

“I’m going to give you what you need. No one’s been able to before, have they? No one worthy enough of you. Of seeing and knowing you as you are. They weren’t good enough.” Will swallows his doubts that he isn’t either. Such a brilliant creature surely *could* do better than him, but he doesn’t want to. He’s said so. Those doubts don’t belong here.

What Hannibal needs right now is strength and stability, and damn it, Will shall give it to him. He’ll give Hannibal everything he’s capable of giving, and then a little more. It’s what he deserves. Nothing less after a lifetime of loneliness and self denial.

“I trust you.”

“You shouldn’t.”

“That is exactly why I do.”

“Curious what I would do?” Will demands. “Curious how I’d react?”

Hannibal whines and buries his forehead in Will’s thigh. Will’s fingers itch to sink into his hair, ground him and guide him, but he doesn’t allow him that luxury yet.

“Answer me.”

Hannibal gasps, a small thing of shock and pleasure. He’s already shivering and shaking, all for Will. The thought of it makes his head spin, and the shakiness of his voice makes Will moan. *“Yes.”*

Will’s fingers sink into his hair at last, mussing it and gripping it tightly in his fist. That too makes Hannibal moan, a low sound into Will’s thigh.

“What do you want, baby? Tell me, and I’ll give it to you.”

“Whatever you want. Anything you choose to give me is a gift.”

Will smiles involuntarily. “Yeah? If I give you nothing more than my fingers the whole night, you won’t complain? You’ll be happy as can be?”

Hannibal hesitates.

Will smirks. “Don’t worry, baby, I’m gonna give you the world.”

“Will—Alpha, please, command me. Tell me what you want.”

“What do *you* want, Hannibal?”

“To serve you. That is all.” Hannibal is panting loudly. “Alpha, tell me what to do. What would please you best.”

Will curses under his breath at the sweet scent of Hannibal’s desperation before his mind catches up. Where to start?

"Come here," he says, reaching out for the only man he's ever wanted, the only mate he'll ever know.

#

Once the dust has settled and they’ve both settled into Hannibal’s decadent bed, Hannibal is the first to disturb the silence. “Thank you, Will.”

“Thank me? For what?”

“For finding me. For keeping me. For allowing me to be yours.” Hannibal raises his knuckles to Will’s lips to kiss. “Each moment I have known under your hand, your dominance, your ownership, and your exquisite violence has been the finest moment I could ever have imagined. You keep managing to outdo yourself and my expectations. I could never entirely predict you.”

He smiles widely, openly up at him. “My alpha,” he purrs, raking a hand down Will’s chest. “You have shown me the beauty of my dynamic in a way that I had never considered before. For that, I am grateful beyond words. You’ve subverted all my expectations. I would not change a thing about you, about us, about myself. Everything is perfect.”

“Nothing can ever be perfect,” Will comments.

Hannibal's eyes dance, eager as always for a chance at debate. Will wonders if he could ever be as invigorating to converse with as Hannibal claims. "That depends entirely on the definition of that elusive concept. What is perfection? Perfection in the eye of society, or in the eye of the beholder? I care not for society. You are all I need. I am beyond happy."

He says he's deliriously happy and he means it; Will can hear it in his voice, feel it thrumming through their bond.

"I am beyond happy," Hannibal adds, "so I will not hear another word of doubt on that front. Doubt is impossible to vanquish, but I aim to try."

"Not impossible," Will comments. "You and I occupy that space between what's improbable and what the polite man flinches away from."

Hannibal hums and tilts his face up, catching Will's eye. Will is transfixed. God, but he's beautiful. His omega is the picture of sin, of faux innocence, of beauty found only in violence, in everything Will has ever wanted. "Promise that you will try, for me, to dispel your doubts that this is exactly where I want to be," Hannibal pleads.

"For you, anything. I'd do anything for you. Anything to please you. Anything to be the one who makes you happy."

"You knew how to do that before you were ever trying." Hannibal shifts his position, a devilish smirk spreading across his face. Will knows what he's thinking before he says anything. "Anything to please me?"

Heat begins to pool in Will's groin once again. "Mm."

Hannibal coaxes Will between his spreading legs. The sweet scent of fresh omega slick fills nose, making his mouth water when Hannibal tries to push his head down. "Then I suggest you do your duty as my alpha, the sooner the better."

Will’s chuckle is dirty and sleazy as he pushes against Hannibal’s hold. “One of us has a lot more patience than the other. I can wait, but **can you, omega?** ”

For all he tries to keep his composure, Hannibal still shivers, and the slick that drips from him can’t lie. His smile never loses its confidence, and his eyes are thick and full with love and arousal that consumes them both whole. Will could sob with relief. He’s found his mirror, his mate. “For you, I am starving and never will I be full. Luckily for me, so are you.”

Will smirks and leans down to kiss him once, tasting the damning fruit of the Garden of Eden, before slithering down to sample further delights just as damning.

Happily will he spend his whole life here, giving this beautiful omega what he deserves, what he needs. Will shall never neglect his duties as an alpha, because Hannibal is the love of his life.

Will is exactly where he wants to be, too.

Chapter End Notes

aaaand that's it! thanks to everyone who has read, supported, and commented on this wip, i'm so glad that it's finally done!

End Notes

surprise, this is where i've been! i am so unbelievably excited about this fic, and the chance to explore one of my favorite tropes with my favorite ship! updates should be frequent. comments and kudos are my fuel. do yall have any favorite parts? anything you're looking forward to with this fic?
follow me on tumblr @hawksredrobe <3
also how much do you wanna bet that after will went home from therapy hannibal had to think Real Hard about whether or not to kill him. but then he was like i want him too carnally i cant chance it

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